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PROFILE OF SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENTS IN THE U.S.

C. EMILY FEISTRITZER
Author and Survey Director

FRED QUELLE
Computer Data Analysis

DAVID T. CHESTER
Editor

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Feistritzer, C. Emily

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Introduction

Education is fast gaining ground as a top priority to the people of this nation. President George Bush aspires to become the "education president," and several recent public opinion polls have revealed that education is of major concern to the American people. A major driving force in this renewed interest in education can be found in the frequent studies, which have produced data showing that U.S. students are not doing well, when compared with students in other industrialized nations. Such data have critical importance, not only for individual students, but for the nation, as a whole.

School boards are the local governing bodies in America's public educational system. The 40 million students enrolled in approximately 84,000 public elementary and secondary schools are under the jurisdiction of more than 15,000 school districts across the nation. Each school district is governed by a school board, and is administered by a superintendent.

The National Center for Education Information (NCEI) conducted a survey of the presidents of these school boards, between November 15, 1988, and February 10, 1989, to determine who these individuals are and what they think about a wide variety of issues concerning education in America.

NCEI conducted a similar survey of school superintendents and public and private school principals, in fall 1987.

Many of the questions asked in both surveys had also been asked of the general public, and of parents of public school students, in surveys conducted by other polling groups, such as the Gallup Organization.

This report, **Profile of School Board Presidents in the U.S.**, analyzes the results of questionnaires completed by 1,217 presidents (or chairs) of school boards, throughout the United States.

It also compares the responses of school board presidents to those of superintendents, public school principals, the general public, and parents of public school students, on a number of critical issues facing education in this nation.

The data are also analyzed across several subgroups, including size of

school districts, metropolitan status of communities, age groups, sex, political views, degrees held, and years of service as a school board member.

These analyses are of critical importance in getting a true picture of what is going on in America's educational system. The tremendous range in size of school districts, as well as the communities in which schools are located, are variables that cannot be overlooked.

The distribution of school districts by enrollment size of district, along with the most recent data on number of districts by enrollment size from the U.S. Department of Education, is shown below.

TABLE 1. PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND ENROLLMENT, BY SIZE OF DISTRICT: 1987-88.

Enrollment Size Of District	School Districts		Enrollment
	Number	Percent	Percent
Total	15,577	100.0	100.0
25,000+	171	1.1	27.3
10,000-24,999	464	3.0	17.4
7,500-9,999	333	2.1	7.2
5,000-7,499	607	4.0	9.3
2,500-4,999	1,912	12.3	16.8
2,000-2,499	841	5.4	4.8
1,500-1,999	1,123	7.2	4.9
1,000-1,499	1,597	10.2	5.0
800-999	781	5.0	1.8
600-799	1,015	6.5	1.8
450-599	1,012	6.5	1.3
300-449	1,278	8.2	1.2
150-299	1,686	10.8	0.9
1-149	2,355	15.1	0.4
Size not reported	408	2.6	0.0

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.

It should be noted that three-fourths of the school districts enroll fewer than 2,500 students each and account for fewer than a fourth of all the students enrolled in public schools. On the other hand, 635 school districts (about four percent) enroll 10,000 or more students each, and, collectively, account for 45 percent of total school enrollment. One percent of all the school districts enroll more than a quarter of all students. Further, 16 school districts in this country enroll 100,000 or more students each, and, together, enroll about eight percent of all the students.

At the other end of the scale, 4,041 school districts -- more than a fourth of all of them -- enroll fewer than 300 students each and account for 1.3 percent of total public elementary and secondary student enrollment in this country.

These facts are very important in such considerations as whether or not a

school board president favors local school autonomy. The probability that there is only **one** school in the smaller school districts is about 100 percent. Local school autonomy is a moot issue in these districts.

It is also important to put the number and size of school districts in the context of the structure of the United States by metropolitan areas. A Census is conducted every decade in the United States. The last Census was in 1980. That Census showed there were 22,529 "incorporated places" in the United States, 13,706 of which (61 percent) were classified as rural. Census data indicated that 26 percent of the population lived in rural areas of the country.

The breakdown of the overall population by types of communities will not be updated until the 1990 Census. However, the number of "places," as of July 1, 1986, was 19,101. Of these places, 24 are urban areas with populations of 500,000 or more, and 84 are urban areas having populations between 150,000 and 499,999.

All of these population statistics are important in light of the school-district arrangement we have in this country and in terms of NCEI's survey of school board presidents.

We sent questionnaires to the school board presidents in 2,197 school districts. Of the 1,217 responses we received, 21 were from school board presidents who identified their communities as being in an inner city with 500,000 or more residents and 52 were from school board presidents in communities with populations between 150,000 and 499,999. While the sample sizes appear small for these sub-categories of school board presidents, we surveyed just about the full universe of large inner-city school board presidents.

School board presidents who represented districts having 10,000 or more students were oversampled in this survey, to achieve enough respondents to allow independent analysis of this crucial segment which represents approximately 45 percent of all students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools in this country. For purposes of analyzing the responses of all school board presidents throughout the country, each of these segments by district enrollment size (fewer than 2,500; 2,500-9,999; and 10,000 or more) were weighted to their proper proportion of all United States school board presidents. (See Appendix A for a complete description of the sample design and methodology used for this survey.)

This study provides much new, and heretofore unknown, information about the people chairing our school boards. The report includes 38 tables of statistics, that tell us a lot about who these presidents are and what they think, how they compare with school administrators, how their attitudes on a variety of issues compare with those of the general public, and what we might expect in the future.

Many people contributed to this undertaking. Those to whom I am most grateful are the school board presidents, who took the time to fill out the questionnaires. Several wrote notes or called to express their personal interest in participating in this survey. Thanks, all of you.

I wish to thank the members of the Advisory Committee, whose advice and suggestions contributed enormously to the success of this survey: John Chubb, The Brookings Institution; Judy Connally, School Board President, Arlington, Va.; Jacqueline Danzberger, Institute for Educational Leadership; Clark Dobson, George Mason University; Denis Doyle, The Hudson Institute; Chester E. Finn., Jr., Educational Excellence Network, Vanderbilt University, and former

Assistant Secretary for Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education; Sol Hurwitz, Committee for Economic Development; Thomas Shannon, National School Boards Association; and Michael Usdan, Institute for Educational Leadership.

I want to thank Fred Quelle, for once again coming through with a computer program that allowed me to analyze the data in numerous ways. My gratitude goes to Graham Huber, of the American Enterprise Institute, who made his voluminous polling files available to me. I wish to thank many at the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, especially Dan Hecker, at the U.S. Bureau of the Census, especially Chuck Nelson, and at the National Center for Education Statistics, especially Vance Grant, for their help in giving us much data with which to compare school board presidents. Thanks to Clark Dobson, who pored over drafts of the report, to Eric Bony, who checked all the numbers, and to Betty Moran, who produced the tables. My most heartfelt thanks to David Chester, who not only edited this document, but was also there every step of the way, and helped in innumerable ways.

Finally, I am grateful for the funding provided by the U.S. Department of Education, which made this project possible.

Emily Feistritzer
February 21, 1989

Highlights of the Study

Public education in the United States is constitutionally under the jurisdiction of state governments. Every state, except Hawaii, has, in turn, divided its school system into districts. According to the U.S. Department of Education, there are 15,577 school districts, ranging in size from the 4,041 that enroll fewer than 300 students each, to 16 districts that each enroll 100,000 or more students. Virtually every school district is governed by a local school board. These boards have had considerable power in determining what happens -- and what does not happen -- in American education.

The National Center for Education Information surveyed 1,217 of the presidents (sometimes called chairs) of these school boards, from November 15, 1988, to February 10, 1989, to determine who these individuals are and what they think about a wide variety of issues concerning education in America.

This report, **Profile of School Board Presidents in the U.S.**, not only analyzes their responses, but also compares them to those of superintendents, public school principals, teachers, the general public, and parents of students in public schools, on a number of critical issues facing education in this country.

❑ On no issue in the NCEI survey were there greater differences between the general public's views and those of school board presidents than on those pertaining to "choice" -- i.e., giving parents the power to choose the schools their children will attend. Two-thirds of school board presidents and of superintendents oppose the idea. This contrasts sharply with three-fourths of the general public and of parents of public school students who favor choice.

❑ School board presidents are split on how they feel about the performance of schools in the nation as a whole, and how they feel about schools in their own communities. When it comes to schools nationally, school board presidents agree with the public generally, that they are not doing very well. However, when polled about the schools in their jurisdictions, they line up with the superintendents and principals who rate their own schools highly.

❑ School officials and the public also disagree on the biggest problems facing the schools in their communities. The public says the biggest problems are "use of drugs" and "lack of discipline." The school board presidents, superintendents, and principals all overwhelmingly say the biggest problem facing the schools in their communities is "lack of financial support."

❑ School board presidents, as well as the public, strongly support paying teachers on the basis of performance. They also concur with the general public that teachers should pass competency tests before being allowed to teach. They strongly favor alternate routes for certifying adults, who already have a degree in a field other than education, to become teachers.

❑ School board presidents are favorable to most of the reform proposals being advanced as ways to improve America's educational system. Topping the list of reforms that school board presidents agreed would improve our educational system was, "Recruit adults who have experience in careers other than education into teaching." Also popular were: allowing individual schools to determine how they will operate; allowing greater flexibility at the school-building level, in determining what and how students are taught; and involving parents more directly in the running of schools. The least popular proposal was: "Give teachers greater authority in the running of schools." Those proposals on which the presidents split about fifty-fifty were: extending the school year; extending the school day; and recruiting adults, experienced in management in fields other than education, into positions as superintendents and principals.

❑ Presidents who have been members of their boards for a short time want changes in numerous areas of education. Those who have been members of their boards 10 or more years (26 percent of the total) are more resistant to reforms and more satisfied with the *status quo*. Presidents in large school districts and in urban and suburban areas are more favorable to reforms than those in small districts and rural communities.

❑ Demographically, school board presidents look like board members generally, and, also, like the superintendents who work for them. They are disproportionately white (97 percent), considerably male (71 percent), in their late forties, married, and have children still at home. They have more education, make more money, and, politically, are more conservative than the average American.

❑ Presidents of school boards have been members of their boards a fairly long time. They don't spend many hours per week on school board activities. A large proportion of them have children enrolled in the school system they govern, and most of them have never had any job in education. Most of them are satisfied with the *status quo* when it comes to who has authority and who should have it, and who influences their decision-making. However, they definitely want the state and federal governments to have less influence on improving local schools.

TABLE 2. NUMBER OF NCEI SURVEY RESPONDENTS, BY SELECTED CATEGORIES

	BASE:
TOTAL	**1,217**
BY DISTRICT ENROLLMENT SIZE	
10,000+	412
2,500-9,999	415
Less than 2,500	390
BY METROPOLITAN STATUS OF COMMUNITY	
Pop. 500,000+	21
Pop. 150,000-499,999	52
Other Urban	264
Suburban	416
Rural	464
BY SEX	
Male	864
Female	353
BY AGE (IN YEARS)	
30-39	231
40-49	535
50-59	316
60+	121
BY NUMBER OF YEARS AS SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER	
1, 2, 3	268
4, 5, 6	402
7, 8, 9	231
10+	316
BY JOB HELD IN EDUCATION	
Elementary/Secondary	244
College/University	146
No Job in Education	827
BY HIGHEST DEGREE HELD	
J.D., M.D., or Ph.D.	122
Master's or Other post-baccalaureate	243
Bachelor's	365
Less than a Bachelor's	487
BY POLITICAL ORIENTATION	
Liberal	123
Moderate	633
Conservative	461

TABLE 3. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENTS -- ALL AND BY SCHOOL DISTRICT ENROLLMENT SIZE AND BY METROPOLITAN STATUS OF COMMUNITY

	All School Board Presidents	By Enrollment Size			By Metro Status of Community				
		10,000+	2,500-9,999	Less than 2,500	Pop. 500,000+	Pop. 150,000-499,999	Other Urban	Suburban	Rural
	(Weighted)	(Unweighted)					(Weighted)		
Base:	1,217	412	415	390	21	52	264	416	464
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
SEX									
Male	71	65	68	73	75	64	68	64	75
Female	29	35	32	27	25	36	32	36	25
RACE									
White	97	89	96	98	55	81	95	98	98
Black	2	7	3	1	15	9	3	2	1
Hispanic	1	3	1	1	25	7	1	*	1
Other	*	1	1	*	5	2	1	*	*
AGE (IN YEARS)									
18-24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
25-29	*	1	1	*	6	2	1	*	*
30-34	3	2	2	4	0	2	3	1	4
35-39	16	7	9	18	5	11	15	11	18
40-44	27	21	21	29	10	29	17	26	29
45-49	17	23	22	16	26	13	15	22	16
50-54	16	16	20	15	5	16	15	13	17
55-59	10	12	14	9	42	5	17	13	9
60-64	6	13	7	5	5	13	11	9	5
65+	4	6	6	3	0	9	7	4	4
Average	47.7	51.4	51.2	46.8	50.2	50.4	50.7	50.1	47.9
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION									
J.D.	4	8	6	3	15	14	8	3	3
M.D.	2	1	2	1	*	7	2	2	1
Ph.D.	4	8	6	3	5	5	7	8	2
Master's	16	24	16	15	20	24	20	19	14
Other postbaccalaureate	4	5	4	4	5	0	2	2	5
Bachelor's	29	32	34	28	30	25	33	32	28
1,2,3 yrs college	24	15	23	25	5	22	19	22	25
Completed H.S.	16	6	9	19	20	2	6	10	21
Less than 12 yrs.	1*	*	*	1	*	0	2	1	
MARITAL STATUS									
Married	94	90	94	94	85	78	91	94	95
Divorced/Separated	3	4	3	3	*	15	3	4	3
Widowed	2	3	1	2	*	5	4	1	1
Single	1	3	2	1	15	2	2	1	1
HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN UNDER 18	64	51	55	68	55	51	52	56	69

TABLE 3. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENTS -- ALL AND BY SCHOOL DISTRICT ENROLLMENT SIZE AND BY METROPOLITAN STATUS OF COMMUNITY

	All School Board Presidents	By Enrollment Size			By Metro Status of Community				
		10,000+	2,500-9,999	Less than 2,500	Pop. 500,000+	Pop. 150,000-499,999	Other Urban	Suburban	Rural
	(Weighted)	(Unweighted)			(Weighted)				
Base:	1,217	412	415	390	21	52	264	416	464
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
OCCUPATION									
Manager/Admin.(Not School)	32	40	40	29	25	44	32	41	28
School Administrator	3	7	5	2	5	11	4	5	2
Professional	31	32	33	30	55	43	41	28	30
Technical/skilled	10	4	6	11	0	4	7	9	11
Clerical	5	5	4	6	0	4	1	6	6
Small bus./sales	17	14	14	17	0	20	12	11	20
Teacher/Professor	13	21	13	13	15	9	16	17	11
Homemaker	15	16	15	15	10	13	11	20	14
Farmer/Agriculture	18	2	7	22	0	0	6	4	25
Un/Semi-skilled	2	1	*	2	0	0	*	3	1
Other	7	6	8	6	0	15	4	10	6
SALARY									
Less than $25,000	20	15	17	11	28	23	13	22	21
$25,000-29,999	10	7	8	11	5	0	10	6	12
$30,000-34,999	9	6	8	10	5	0	9	10	9
$35,000-39,999	10	8	8	10	11	7	7	9	10
$40,000-44,999	9	7	6	9	5	2	9	5	10
$45,000-49,999	8	6	9	8	5	11	13	8	8
$50,000-54,999	8	9	8	8	11	11	4	10	7
$55,000-59,999	4	4	4	4	0	4	3	4	5
$60,000-64,999	3	6	4	3	5	10	4	4	2
$65,000-69,999	2	4	2	2	0	4	4	1	2
$70,000-74,999	3	5	3	2	5	4	5	3	2
$75,000 and over	13	21	21	10	16	24	17	17	10
HOUSEHOLD INCOME									
Less than $25,000	6	3	3	7	21	7	1	2	8
$25,000-34,999	12	7	4	14	0	0	11	10	13
$35,000-44,999	15	10	14	16	10	7	13	14	17
$45,000-54,999	16	11	15	16	5	7	11	13	18
$55,000-64,999	13	11	13	13	16	18	14	13	13
$65,000-74,999	11	12	9	11	10	7	16	12	10
$75,000-84,999	8	10	8	7	5	4	7	7	8
$85,000-94,999	4	9	4	3	5	15	4	6	2
$95,000-104,999	4	6	6	4	5	5	7	5	4
$105,000-114,999	1	4	3	1	5	5	1	2	1
$115,000-124,999	1	2	2	1	0	0	2	2	1
$125,000 or more	8	16	15	6	16	22	12	13	6

** Less than 0.5 percent*

Chapter 1: Demographic Profile of School Board Presidents

Presidents of school boards look like school board members, generally, and -- amazingly -- like the superintendents who work for them. They are overwhelmingly white, considerably male, in their late forties, married, and have children at home. They have more education, have higher incomes, and, politically, are more conservative than the average American.

SEX

Women are more represented in the ranks of school board presidents than they are in superintendencies. Nearly three out of ten (29 percent) of school board chairs are women, compared with only four percent of superintendents who are women. Thirty-nine percent of school board members are women, according to a survey conducted by the National School Boards Association (see Appendix B).

There are more women presidents of school boards in large districts than in small ones. While women comprise 27 percent of school board presidents in districts that enroll 2,500 or fewer students, they make up 35 percent of those in districts enrolling 10,000 or more students and 32 percent in districts enrolling between 2,500 and 9,999 students.

The largest representation of women school board presidents occurs in suburban areas and medium-sized inner cities (36 percent each), and the smallest in rural communities (25 percent).

Across age groups, there are no significant differences in the composition of school board presidents, by sex. Presidents of school boards in their thirties are just as likely to be male as those in their sixties.

RACE

School board presidents are disproportionately white, as are school superintendents, and school board members, generally. An overwhelming 97 percent of presidents are white, 2 percent are black, 1 percent are Hispanic, and fewer than 1 percent are "Other races." This compares with 97 percent of superintendents, and 94 percent of all school board members, who are white.

Eighty-five percent of the U.S. population today is white. Of all employed persons in the U.S., 87 percent are white. Whites represent 92 percent of those in the category of "executives, administrators, and managers," and 90 percent in "professional specialties."

Blacks make up 12 percent of the total population, 10 percent of all employed persons, 5 percent of executives, administrators, and managers, 7 percent of workers in professional specialties, and 6 percent of all college graduates in the workforce.

In the administrative ranks of public elementary and secondary schools, blacks make up 1 percent of superintendents, 6 percent of principals, and 6 percent of teachers. One percent of principals and 2 percent of teachers in private schools are black.

Whites make up 76 percent of all students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools, and 90 percent of all students in private schools. Black students account for 16 percent of all students in public schools, and 6 percent in private schools.

The racial composition of school district enrollments varies considerably, across the United States. While public school enrollment, overall, is 24 percent minority, and rising nationally, the differences by type of community are striking. Slightly more than a fourth of students enrolled in elementary and secondary schools are enrolled in inner cities (26 percent), but 54 percent of all black students, and 52 percent of Hispanic students, are enrolled in inner city schools.

According to the 1980 Census, 32 percent of all U.S. inhabitants lived in inner cities. The distribution, by race, was: 27 percent of whites; 60 percent of blacks; 53 percent of persons of Spanish origin; 22 percent of American Indians; 48 percent of Asians and Pacific Islanders; and 57 percent of "Other races" lived in inner cities.

It should be noted, in this context, that 69 percent of the school districts in this country are in communities identified as rural, compared with only 9 percent that are in urban areas, and 32 percent that are in suburbs.

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION

While three out of ten (30 percent) of school board presidents have a degree beyond a bachelor's, four out of ten (41 percent) have less than a bachelor's degree,

The variation in these data by size of school district is striking. While 17 percent of school board presidents in large school districts have a law, medical or doctorate degree, 7 percent of those in communities that enroll 2,500 or fewer students have any one of these degrees. Nearly a fourth (24 percent) of presidents in the large districts have a Master's or other postbaccalaureate degree, compared with 15 percent of those in the smallest districts.

More than half (55 percent) of school board presidents in districts that enroll 2,500 or fewer students have 1, 2 or 3 years of college (25 percent), a high school diploma (19 percent) or less than 12 years of schooling (1 percent) as their highest level of education.

In the largest school districts, 6 percent of the school board presidents have a high school diploma as their highest level of education, and 24 percent have 1, 2 or three years of college.

One in five (19.6 percent) Americans, 25 years or older, has at least a bachelor's degree.

OCCUPATION

About a third of school board presidents identify the kind of work they do as "managers/administrators, not school administrators" (32 percent). A third (31 percent) also say they work in "professional" occupations. Nearly a fifth (17 percent) say they work in "small business/sales" and 13 percent say they work as a "teacher/professor".

Nearly a fifth (18 percent) report their work is in farming/agriculture, 10 percent say they work as a "technical/skilled worker", 5 percent as "clerical" and 2 percent as an "unskilled, semi-skilled worker."

The variation in occupations of school board presidents is most notable in the smallest districts and in different types of communities. A fourth of the presidents in rural communities and 22 percent in districts that enroll fewer than 2,500 students are in agricultural occupations, compared with 2 percent in districts that enroll 10,000 or more students and none in the largest urban areas.

The highest concentration of school board presidents who are "managers/administrators" are in districts that enroll 10,000 or more students and those that enroll between 2,500 and 9,999 students (40 percent each). This compares with 29 percent of school board presidents in districts that enroll fewer than 2,500 students who are in managerial or administrative occupations.

Forty-one percent of school board presidents in suburban areas and 44 percent in cities with populations between 150,000 and 499,999 are in management or administrative jobs. This is compared with 28 percent in rural areas, 32 percent in smaller urban areas and 25 percent in the largest inner cities.

MARITAL STATUS

School officials tend to represent the traditional family considerably more than the overall population. While 57 percent of all households in this country are married-couple households, 94 percent of school board presidents as well as 94 percent of superintendents and 87 percent of public school principals are married.

Only three percent of school board presidents, 4 percent of superintendents, and 7 percent of principals in public schools are divorced or separated.

Half of married school board presidents report that their spouses are employed full-time, 22 percent say their spouses work part-time, and 27 percent checked "Not employed."

Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of school board president households have children under 18 in them. This compares with only 35 percent of all American households and 47 percent of all married-couple households that have children under 18 living with them.

The differences among the presidents on whether or not they have children living with them by school district size and by type of community are significant.

Nearly seven out of ten (68 percent) school-board-president-households in school districts enrolling fewer than 2,500 students have children under 18 in them, compared with 51 percent of those in the largest districts and 55 percent in those districts that enroll between 2,500 and 9,999 students.

In rural areas, 69 percent of school-board-president households have children in them, compared with 55 percent in inner cities with populations of 500,000 or more, 51 percent in cities between 150,000 and 499,999, 52 percent in other urban areas and 56 percent in suburban areas.

SALARY AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The range of annual earnings reported by school board presidents is quite wide. While 13 percent report annual earnings of $75,000 or more, 20 percent say they earn less than $25,000 per year, and an additional 19 percent report earnings between $25,000 and $35,000. The median annual earnings falls in the $40,000-$44,999 category.

A third (33 percent) of the school board presidents report annual earnings of $50,000 or more. This compares with 51 percent of school superintendents, 21 percent of all college graduates working full-time, year round and 4.8 percent of all workers in America who earn $50,000 or more per year.

Thirteen percent of school board presidents, 7 percent of superintendents, 8.2 percent of full-time, year-round working college graduates, and 1.6 percent of all workers earn $75,000 or more a year.

School board presidents in school districts enrolling fewer than 2,500

students and those in rural communities earn less than their counterparts in other types of districts.

More than a fifth (21 percent) of school board presidents in districts that enroll 10,000 or more students and of those that enroll between 2,500 and 9,999 students earn $75,000 or more, whereas 10 percent in those districts enrolling fewer than 2,500 students do.

About half (49 percent) of school board presidents in districts that enroll 10,000 or more students earn $50,000 or more per year. Ninety-nine percent of superintendents who preside over these districts earn $50,000 or more, and nearly half (48 percent) of these superintendents earn $75,000 or more.

POLITICAL VIEWS

When asked how they would describe their views on most political matters -- as liberal, moderate or conservative, 10 percent of school board presidents identified themselves as "Liberal", 52 percent as "Moderate", and 38 percent as "Conservative".

This compares with 23 percent of adults, polled by CBS, January 12-15, 1989, who considered themselves "Liberal," 37 percent "Moderate," and 34 percent "Conservative."

Presidents of school boards in districts enrolling fewer than 2,500 students, and those in rural communities, tended to be more "Conservative" than in other areas.

In NCEI's 1987 survey of school administrators, 7 percent of superintendents said they considered themselves "Liberal," 63 percent "Moderate," and 30 percent "Conservative."

More school board presidents, superintendents, and principals, regard themselves as Republican, than does the general voting population. Forty-three percent of school board presidents, 40 percent of superintendents, and 45 percent of principals -- compared with 32 percent of the general electorate -- identify themselves as Republican.

Two-thirds (64 percent) of school board presidents -- compared with 56 percent of all voters -- cast ballots for George Bush in the 1988 Presidential election.

TABLE 4. POLITICS

QUESTION 37. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR VIEWS ON MOST POLITICAL MATTERS? GENERALLY, DO YOU THINK OF YOURSERLF AS LIBERAL, MODERATE, OR CONSERVATIVE?

			School Board Presidents							
			By Enrollment Size			By Metro Status of Community				
	School Board Presidents	National Totals/a	10,000+	2,500-9,999	Less than 2,500	Pop. 500,000+	Pop. 150,000-499,999	Other Urban	Suburban	Rural
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
POLITICAL ORIENTATION										
Liberal	10	23	15	12	9	22	28	15	11	8
Moderate	52	37	58	56	51	72	43	58	52	52
Conservative	38	34	27	34	40	6	28	28	37	40
Don't know		6								

QUESTION 36. REGARDLESS OF HOW YOU MAY VOTE, WHAT DO YOU USUALLY CONSIDER YOURSELF -- A REPUBLICAN, A DEMOCRAT, INDEPENDENT?

Republican	43	32	40	45	43	11	34	39	46	43
Democrat	30	35	35	31	28	72	34	40	25	29
Independent	27	29	25	24	29	17	32	21	29	28
Don't know		4								

QUESTION 38. DID YOU VOTE IN THE LAST PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION? IF YOU VOTED, DID YOU VOTE FOR GEORGE BUSH, MICHAEL DUKAKIS, OR ANOTHER CANDIDATE?

George Bush	64	54/b	58	65	64	45	56	56	69	64
Michael Dukakis	34	46	41	33	34	55	44	44	30	34
Other candidate	1		1	1	1	*	*	*	*	1
Didn't vote	1		0	1	1	*	*	9	1	1

Source: /a CBS poll of 1,553 adults conducted January 12-15, 1989
/b CBS/New York Times exit poll of 11,655 voters, November 8, 1988

** Less than 0.5 percent*

Chapter 2: School Board Matters

LENGTH OF SCHOOL BOARD SERVICE

All school board presidents have been members of their school boards; a high proportion were members for several years. More than a fourth (26 percent) of all school board presidents have been a member of their current school board for 10 or more years. Nine percent have been school board members for 15 or more years. Although their proportions are small, there are some presidents who had served on their school boards for 25 years or more (1.1 percent overall, and 1.5 percent among presidents in the smallest districts, with enrollments under 2,500).

The median number of years the presidents have been school board members is six years.

Male school board presidents tend to have served as members longer than women. Twelve percent of male presidents, compared to 2 percent of female presidents, have been members of their school board for 15 years or more. Those with the least education also have served longest. Twelve percent of presidents who have less than a bachelor's degree, compared with 6 percent who have a J.D., M.D., or Ph.D., 8 percent who have a Master's or other postbaccalaureate degree, and 7 percent whose highest level of education is a bachelor's degree, have been members of their school board 15 years or more.

CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

Most of the nation's school board presidents have children of their own enrolled in either elementary or secondary schools and/or in colleges or universities. In addition, most of these children attend public, rather than private educational institutions.

Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of school board presidents have children currently enrolled in public elementary or secondary schools in their own districts. Seven percent report having children enrolled in public elementary or secondary schools in a district other than where they are president, 1 percent have children in a religiously affiliated private elementary or secondary school and fewer than 1 percent have children enrolled in non-religious private schools. More presidents in small districts tend to have children enrolled in elementary or secondary schools in their districts, than do those in other districts.

Analyzed by the size of communities in which they reside, those school board presidents in rural communities represent the largest proportion who have their own children enrolled in their district (68 percent). Only 31 percent of school board presidents in cities with populations of a half million or more have children enrolled in their own district.

Virtually none of the school board presidents, in any size district or community, send their children to non-religious private schools. However, four out of the 21 respondents in cities of more than 500,000 population report having children enrolled in religiously affiliated private elementary and secondary schools.

A significant proportion of presidents said they have children enrolled in colleges and universities -- more in public (30 percent) than private (10 percent). There were no significant statistical differences -- based upon the size of their own school districts or the population of the communities in which they reside -- among school board presidents with children in public colleges and universities.

The practice of school board presidents' sending their own children to private colleges or universities is most common among those who reside in communities over 150,000 population or in suburbs, as well as those who head school boards in larger school districts which enroll more than 2,500 students.

JOB HELD IN EDUCATION?

Most school board presidents have never held a job in education, either as a classroom teacher or an administrator.

Sixty-eight percent of presidents said they have never worked in the educational system, in any capacity. This was most prevalent among those in small school districts with enrollments of less than 2,500 (70 percent) and those who reside in rural communities (73 percent).

Of those who said they had worked in education, most had been classroom teachers in elementary or secondary schools. One in five (20 percent) school board presidents had been an elementary or secondary school teacher.

The second largest group of presidents with prior educational experience said they had worked as college or university professors (8 percent).

School board presidents who said they had been in educational jobs, were in roles other than teaching or administration (7 percent), had been college or university administrators (3 percent), or they had served as elementary or

secondary school principals (3 percent). Fewer than 1 percent had previously worked as school superintendents.

Nine percent of school board presidents said they were holding a job in education when they were elected to the school board. Of these, 30 percent were elementary or secondary teachers, 39 percent were college professors, 3 percent were elementary or secondary school principals, 12 percent were college administrators, and 16 percent reported having held some "other" job in education.

HOURS PER WEEK SPENT ON SCHOOL BOARD ACTIVITIES

Nine out of ten school board presidents report spending less than 15 hours per week on school board activities (89 percent), with the largest proportions reporting that they spend 1-2 hours (18 percent), 3-4 hours (25 percent), or 5-6 hours (22 percent) each week on school board business.

Hardly any presidents report spending more than 25 hours per week on school board activities.

The reported work habits did not vary greatly, regardless of whether presidents had previous educational work experience -- either as teachers or administrators at the elementary, secondary or college level. Those who had no previous educational experience were more likely than the others to spend less than 9 hours each week on school board business.

The responses indicated that the longer a president has served on a school board, the less time he or she devoted each week to school board activities.

The level of personal educational attainment also appeared to have little effect on the amount of time spent on school board business. Most of those who are college graduates said they spend 3-6 hours each week on school board activities. Most of those who had less than a college degree said they spend 1-6 hours each week on school board business.

Women who are school board presidents devote more time to school board activities than do their male counterparts.

While 57 percent of female presidents said they spend 7 or more hours per week on school board work, 75 percent of the male presidents said they spend less than 7 hours each week on school board business. Half of the male presidents, compared with a fourth of the female presidents, report spending less than 5 hours per week on school board activities.

School board presidents in the largest districts---with enrollments over 10,000 students---spend considerably more time each week on school board activities, than do presidents in smaller districts. Three-fourths (78 percent) of presidents in districts enrolling fewer than 2,500 students spend **less** than 7 hours per week on school board activities. This compares with 85 percent of presidents in districts that enroll 10,000 and over, who spend **more** than 7 hours per week.

The median number of hours spent on school board activities by presidents in the largest districts is 12 hours; medium districts, 7 hours; and small districts, 5 hours.

PERCEPTIONS OF TIME SPENT ON SCHOOL BOARD ACTIVITIES

When asked about the amounts of time they spend on various tasks in the course of their school board work -- and whether these were "the right amounts, too much, or too little" -- the areas in which school board presidents said they spend "Too much time" were related to labor relations: negotiating/bargaining with teacher groups (30 percent); and bargaining with groups that represent employees other than teachers in the system (12 percent).

School board presidents felt they spend "too little time" on: interacting with other local governing bodies (48 percent); selecting/adopting school curricula (45 percent); selecting/adopting textbooks (37 percent); meeting/conferring with teacher groups and discussing changing student population demographics, e g., "children at risk," (both 36 percent) and student test scores/achievement measures and ceremonial/ritualistic/awards/recognition activities (both 30 percent).

There was considerable agreement on those tasks on which the majority of school board presidents felt they spent "the right amount of time"---all of which dealt with discipline: due process hearings for students (86 percent); student disciplinary action (85 percent); making personnel decisions (84 percent); and due process hearings for personnel (83 percent).

School board presidents, by and large, are satisfied with the amount of time they are spending on a wide range of school board activities. On only two, out of a suggested 18 activities -- "interacting with other local governing bodies" and "national/state educational issues" -- did fewer than half of the school board presidents report they were not spending the right amount of time.

Only slight differences in perceptions of time spent among school board presidents showed up when size of school districts were considered. For example, 54 percent of the presidents in districts enrolling 10,000 and over, compared with 46 percent of those in districts that enroll fewer than 2,500 students, reported spending too little time "interacting with other local governing bodies."

DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY

The school board presidents were asked to specify which participants in the educational process "currently have" the ultimate decision-making responsibility in various school-related matters in their districts, and which "should have" this power.

The responses to these items seem to indicate that school board presidents are fairly satisfied with the status quo, when it comes to who makes decisions.

In each category, the respondents gave the lowest ratings to parents, in terms of their having the ultimate responsibility for decisions on a range of educational matters. Only 10 percent of school board presidents felt that parents currently have the ultimate decision-making responsibility in selecting curricula, while 14 percent said parents should have this responsibility.

Some respondents indicated that parents should have the responsibility in principal evaluation -- 11 percent said parents currently do have this responsibility; 12 percent said parents should. Eleven percent said parents should have responsibility for decisions on extracurricular activities and what curriculum materials are used. Ten percent said parents should have responsibility in selecting textbooks, and 9 percent said parents should have responsibility in deciding academic standards and line items in their district budget.

About half of the school board presidents said that teachers currently do and should have primary responsibility for: selecting textbooks, methodology/pedagogy/how subjects are taught; and what curriculum materials are used. They also rated school board and superintendent responsibility in selecting curriculum relatively high.

While 44 percent said the ultimate responsibility for selecting teachers rests, and 40 percent said it should rest with superintendents, there was an indication of some support for principals having more authority in this area.

Principals were judged to have the greatest responsibility for teacher evaluation (70 percent said that principals currently have this responsibility, and 67 percent believed that they should). However, the responses showed that a small percentage of school board presidents feel this responsibility should be reduced for principals, and increased for school boards and superintendents.

The presidents believed that the greatest current responsibilities for superintendents were in principal evaluation (74 percent), and over line items within the district budget (53 percent). Although slightly fewer felt the superintendents should have these responsibilities (71 and 49 percent), the differences are not significant.

More than half of the presidents (56 percent) said that the state had and should continue to have responsibility for teacher certification. A slightly smaller number (54 percent) believed that the state should have the responsibility for certifying principals.

The school board presidents believed that school boards did have and should continue to have primary responsibility for: the overall school district budget (73 and 76 percent); dismissal of teachers (56 and 57 percent); dismissal of principals (64 and 64 percent); principal selection (58 and 56 percent); and disciplinary policies (61 and 57 percent).

DEGREE TO WHICH VARIOUS GROUPS INFLUENCE THE SCHOOL BOARD

If what the presidents of school boards surveyed say is accurate -- about

who influences school board decision-making and to what degree -- school boards are, indeed, fairly autonomous governing bodies. With the exception of the superintendent and district central office, the state department of education, and, to a lesser extent, the federal department of education, no group was felt to exert much influence on the decision-making of school boards. Parents and parent groups are perceived to have the least influence.

It comes as no surprise that virtually all (99 percent) of the school board presidents said the superintendent in their district influenced the decision-making of their board. Eighty-one percent said the superintendent had "great influence" over their decision-making.

Second in order of influence was the state department of education. Nearly nine out of ten presidents surveyed (88 percent) said the state department of education had either "great" (51 percent) or "some" (37 percent) influence.

A fourth (24 percent) reported the U.S. Department of Education had "great influence". Yet 30 percent said the federal department of education did not have much influence over their decision-making (24 percent) or no influence at all (6 percent).

Teacher unions/professional organizations were perceived to have a "great influence" by 14 percent of the school board presidents, "some influence" by 49 percent, "not much influence" by 26 percent and "no influence at all" by 10 percent.

The groups identified as having the least influence on the decision-making of the school board were individual parents, the PTA (Parent Teachers Association), and "Special interest groups."

WHICH LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT SHOULD INFLUENCE LOCAL SCHOOLS?

FEDERAL

School board presidents, as well as superintendents and principals, are at odds with the general public on whether or not the federal government should have more or less influence on improving local public schools. The public favors more. All school officials want less influence.

When asked, "Would you like the federal government in Washington to have more influence, less influence, or about the same amount of influence, on improving the local public schools? How about the state government? How about the local government?", 37 percent of the adults polled by the Gallup Organization in spring 1987 said the federal government should have **more** influence, and 39 percent said it should have **less**.

This compares with only 7 percent of school board presidents surveyed by NCEI in winter 1988-89, 9 percent of superintendents and 10 percent of public school principals surveyed by NCEI in fall 1987 who said the federal government should have **more** influence on improving local schools.

On the contrary, 59 percent of presidents of school boards and 56 percent of both superintendents and principals think the federal government should have **less** influence on improving local schools.

STATE

On the issue of state governments having more or less influence, 55 percent of the public thinks the state government should have **more** influence on improving local schools.

There is strong negative sentiment among school board presidents concerning state influence. They overwhelmingly want the state department of education to have **less** influence on improving their local schools. Nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of the presidents say the state department of education should have **less** influence. This compares with 49 percent of superintendents, 43 percent of principals and 21 percent of the general public who think the state government should have less influence on improving local schools.

This is consistent with school board presidents' responses to other items in the NCEI survey. When asked about satisfaction with various aspects of their jobs as school board president's, they expressed the least satisfaction with their relationship with the state department of education. Four out of ten presidents said they were "somewhat" or "very" dissatisfied with their relationship with the state department of education. The closest any other group came to having the school board presidents dissatisfied with them were teacher groups. Fifteen percent of the presidents said they were dissatisfied with their relationship with groups representing teachers.

On another item, when the presidents were asked if their school board's authority had increased, decreased or stayed the same, 58 percent said it had decreased, and 89 percent of those who felt the board's authority had decreased said it had been taken over by the state.

LOCAL

All groups surveyed on this question of government influence on improving local schools agreed the local government should have MORE influence. Nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of the general public, 54 percent of school board presidents, 50 percent of superintendents and 48 percent of public school principals favor more influence from the local government on improving local schools.

The spread of sentiment that the local government should have less influence ranged from 13 percent of the presidents of school boards to 15 percent of the general public.

TABLE 5. NUMBER OF YEARS SERVED AS SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER, ALL AND BY SELECTED CATEGORIES

QUESTION 1. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A MEMBER OF YOUR SCHOOL BOARD?

	All School Board Presidents	By Enrollment Size			By Metro Status in Community				
		10,000+	Less 2,500-9,999	than 2,500	Pop. Pop. 500,000+	150,000-499,999	Other Urban	Suburban	Rural
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
NO. YEARS AS MEMBER OF CURRENT SCHOOL BOARD									
1	3	2	4	2	20	11	4	3	2
2	5	6	6	4	10	2	6	8	3
3	14	13	11	15	15	18	18	13	14
4	9	15	10	8	5	11	11	6	10
5	14	11	14	15	10	20	11	15	15
6	10	12	7	10	5	5	4	11	10
7	7	8	8	7	10	7	8	8	7
8	7	10	7	7	5	9	12	6	6
9	5	3	3	6	5	2	3	4	6
10	4	3	5	3	*	2	5	4	3
11	4	3	5	4	*	5	3	5	4
12	5	3	5	5	5	*	3	5	4
13	2	.8	4	1	5	2	6	2	1
14	2	3	2	2	*	3	1	2	2
15+	9	7	9	11	5	3	5	8	11

NUMBER OF YEARS ON SCHOOL BOARD BY SEX AND BY HIGHEST DEGREE HELD

	By Sex		By Highest Degree Held			
	Male	Female	J.D. M.D. Ph.D.	Master's & Other post-baccalaureate	Bachelor's	Less than Bachelor's
	%	%	%	%	%	%
NO. OF YEARS						
1	3	1	7	2	2	2
2	5	5	3	6	5	4
3	11	21	18	13	16	13
4	10	7	4	14	11	6
5	13	18	13	7	19	15
6	10	8	3	11	10	10
7	7	9	6	12	7	6
8	8	4	8	7	5	8
9	4	8	9	8	3	4
10	4	3	10	2	3	3
11	4	5	2	2	4	6
12	5	4	7	4	3	6
13	1	3	*	*	4	1
14	2	2	3	2	2	2
15+	12	2	6	8	7	12

** Less than 0.5 percent*

TABLE 6. PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENTS WHO HAVE CHILDREN ENROLLED IN SPECIFIC TYPES OF SCHOOLS AND WHO HAVE HELD A JOB IN EDUCATION, ALL AND BY DISTRICT ENROLLMENT SIZE AND METROPOLITAN STATUS OF COMMUNITY

QUESTION 48. DO YOU HAVE ANY CHILDREN NOW ENROLLED IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF SCHOOLS?

	All School Board Presidents	By Enrollment Size			By Metro Status of Community				
		10,000+	2,500-9,999	Less than 2,500	Pop. 500,000+	Pop. 150,000-499,999	Other Urban	Suburban	Rural
	(Weighted)	(Unweighted)			(Weighted)				
Base:	1,217	412	415	390	21	52	264	416	464
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Public Elementary/Secondary school in district in which I am school board president	63	50	56	66	31	60	58	52	68
Public Elementary/Secondary school in district other than where I am school board president	7	3	4	8	5	2	3	7	7
Religiously affiliated private elementary/secondary school	1	3	3	1	21	4	1	1	1
Non-religiously affiliated private elementary/secondary school	*	*	*	1	0	0	*	1	*
Public college/university	30	32	35	28	16	31	28	37	28
Private college/university	10	19	15	8	16	17	6	19	8
No children now enrolled in school	15	21	22	13	26	25	20	17	13
Other	3	5	3	3	0	2	3	2	4

QUESTION 49. HAVE YOU EVER HELD ANY OF THE FOLLOWING JOBS IN EDUCATION?

Elementary/Secondary Teacher	20	29	23	19	15	20	32	23	17
College/University Professor	8	16	11	7	10	14	15	11	5
Elementary/Secondary Principal	3	6	3	3	0	7	4	3	3
Superintendent	*	1	1	1	0	2	*	2	1
College/University Admin.	3	6	5	2	10	4	5	4	1
Other	7	12	9	7	15	7	8	7	7
No Job in Education	68	56	64	70	60	65	56	62	73

** Less than 0.5 percent*

TABLE 7. HOURS PER WEEK SPENT ON SCHOOL BOARD ACTIVITIES, ALL AND BY SELECTED CATEGORIES

QUESTION 3. ON AVERAGE, HOW MANY HOURS PER WEEK WOULD YOU SAY YOU SPEND ON SCHOOL BOARD ACTIVITIES?

	1-2 hours	3-4 hours	5-6 hours	7-9 hours	10-14 hours	15-19 hours	20-24 hours	25-29 hours	30-34 hours	35-39 hours	40+ hours
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
ALL	19	25	22	11	13	5	4	1	*	*	*
BY HELD PREVIOUS JOB IN EDUCATION											
Elementary/Secondary	16	18	14	14	18	8	6	3	1	*	1
College/University	12	15	22	10	13	13	8	6	1	*	*
None	20	28	24	9	12	3	3	*	*	*	*
BY NUMBER OF YEARS ON SCHOOL BOARD											
1-3 years	12	18	21	12	18	7	7	2	*	*	1
4-6 years	20	26	21	11	11	5	4	*	*	*	*
7-9 years	11	29	30	10	12	3	2	3	*	*	*
10+ years	25	28	18	9	14	2	2	1	*	*	0
BY DEGREES HELD											
J.D.,M.D.,Ph.D.	11	32	22	7	18	6	2	1	1	*	*
Master's/other post-baccalaureate	12	30	18	13	12	6	4	3	*	*	1
Baccalaureate	20	23	23	9	16	4	4	*	*	*	*
Less than college degree	22	23	23	12	12	3	4	1	*	*	*
BY SEX											
Male	21	29	25	8	10	4	2	1	*	0	0
Female	11	16	16	18	22	5	8	2	1	*	1
BY DISTRICT SIZE											
10,000+	3	8	14	12	27	13	13	4	4	1	3
2,500-9,999	7	23	18	16	22	7	6	2	*	*	0
Less than 2,500	22	27	24	9	10	3	3	1	0	0	*

** Less than 0.5 percent*

TABLE 8. PERCEPTIONS OF TIME SPENT ON SCHOOL BOARD ACTIVITIES

QUESTION 6. THERE IS MUCH TALK ABOUT THE MANY THINGS SCHOOL BOARDS HAVE TO DEAL WITH AND HOW THEY SPEND THEIR TIME IN LIGHT OF ALL THEY HAVE TO DO. DO YOU THINK YOUR SCHOOL BOARD SPENDS TOO MUCH, TOO LITTLE, OR ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF TIME ON EACH OF THE FOLLOWING?

	All School Board Presidents		
	Too Much	Too Little	Right Amount
	%	%	%
Making personnel decisions	4	11	84
Selecting/adopting school curricula	1	45	53
Selecting/adopting textbooks	*	37	57
Determining school district budgets	8	18	74
Student disciplinary actions	5	6	85
Due process hearings for personnel	8	3	83
Due process hearings for students	4	4	86
Ceremonial/ritualistic/awards/recognition activities	4	30	62
Negotiating/bargaining with teacher groups	30	5	62
Meeting/conferring with teacher groups	4	36	55
Bargaining with groups that represent employees other than teachers in the system	12	9	70
Interacting with other local governing bodies	1	48	47
Discussions with the superintendent outside of school board meetings	2	22	76
Building-maintenance concerns	9	13	77
National/state education issues	2	48	47
Student test scores/achievement measures	2	30	67
Discussing changing student population/demographics, e.g., "children at risk"	1	36	58

TABLE 9. PERCEPTIONS OF TIME SPENT ON SCHOOL BOARD ACTIVITIES BY DISTRICT ENROLLMENT SIZE

	Too Much Time By Enrollment Size			Too Little Time By Enrollment Size		
	10,000+	2,500-9,999	Less than 2,500	10,000+	2,500 9,999	Less than 2,500
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Making personnel decisions	8	5	3	8	9	12
Selecting/adopting school curricula	1	1	1	43	44	45
Selecting/adopting textbooks	1	1	0	30	33	39
Determining school district budgets	10	11	7	19	17	18
Student disciplinary actions	6	8	4	7	5	6
Due process hearings for personnel	11	8	8	2	2	3
Ceremonial/ritualistic/awards/ recognition activities	5	5	3	5	2	4
Negotiating/bargaining with teacher groups	9	6	4	18	27	32
Meeting/conferring with teacher groups	25	31	30	9	3	6
Bargaining with groups that represent employees other than teachers in the system	4	4	4	34	34	37
Interacting with other local governing bodies	12	15	12	10	4	10
Discussions with the superintendent outside of school board meetings	2	2	1	54	51	46
Building-maintenance concerns	4	1	1	25	23	22
National/state education issues	11	8	9	16	18	12
Student test scores/achievement measures	1	3	2	49	52	47
Discussing changing student population/ demographics, e.g., "children at risk"	6	1	2	28	28	31

TABLE 10. WHO CURRENTLY MAKES THE DECISIONS/WHO SHOULD MAKE DECISIONS IN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

QUESTIONS 7 AND 8. THERE IS MUCH DISCUSSION AMONG EDUCATORS THESE DAYS ABOUT WHO SHOULD HAVE THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR VARIOUS DECISIONS IN EDUCATION. WHO CURRENTLY MAKES THE ULTIMATE DECISIONS ABOUT EACH OF THE FOLLOWING SCHOOL-RELATED MATTERS IN YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT? WHO SHOULD MAKE THE ULTIMATE DECISIONS ABOUT EACH OF THE FOLLOWING SCHOOL-RELATED MATTERS IN YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT?

	School Boards		Superintendents		Principals		Teachers		Parents		State Level	
	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Class size	38	49	23	25	17	23	5	10	4	6	24	12
Textbook selection	28	28	23	26	31	31	44	41	7	10	8	7
Teacher certification/ licensing	10	14	27	24	3	5	1	1	5	4	56	56
Teacher selection	36	36	44	40	29	35	5	6	8	7	6	6
Teacher dismissal	56	57	37	32	15	20	2	2	5	4	11	10
Academic standards	47	56	27	29	18	17	8	10	5	9	16	16
Principal selection	58	56	41	44	*	*	1	1	6	7	9	9
Principal dismissal	64	64	34	35	*	0	0	0	4	4	11	11
Teacher evaluation	5	8	24	26	70	67	10	11	5	6	1	2
Principal evaluation	14	19	74	71	1	1	*	2	11	12	2	5
Principal certification/ licensing	11	14	31	28	1	1	*	*	5	5	52	54
Selecting curriculum	31	40	40	36	34	33	28	30	10	14	12	9
Disciplinary policy	61	57	25	25	28	29	10	13	4	7	10	9
Methodology/pedagogy/how subjects are taught	5	10	31	35	38	38	47	47	6	8	3	4
Total school district budget	73	76	29	25	4	4	2	2	5	4	12	13
Line items within district budget	37	42	53	49	11	10	3	4	8	9	6	6
School building budget	42	42	32	30	26	31	7	8	5	5	8	8
Extracurricular activities	29	31	32	30	46	44	14	16	8	11	6	6
What curriculum materials are used	14	20	34	33	40	40	46	45	8	11	5	4
What subject achievement measures (tests) are used	17	22	46	45	32	33	20	20	7	8	18	14

C = Currently S = Should

** Less than 0.5 percent*

TABLE 11. WHO INFLUENCES THE SCHOOL BOARD

QUESTION 23. ***SOMETIMES GROUPS AFFECT THE WAY SCHOOLS ARE GOVERNED. ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5, INDICATE THE DEGREE TO WHICH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING INFLUENCES THE DECISION-MAKING OF YOUR SCHOOL BOARD.***

	All School Board Presidents				
	Great Influence	Some Influence	Not Much Influence	No Influence At All	Not Sure
	%	%	%	%	%
Teacher unions/professional organizations	14	49	26	10	1
Community groups	8	67	22	3	0
Superintendent	81	18	1	*	0
Central office	27	50	16	4	3
Individual parents	3	54	39	4	0
PTA	4	51	29	13	3
Special interest groups	2	31	50	15	2
State Department of Education	51	37	8	3	1
U.S. Department of Education	24	42	24	6	3

** Less than 0.5 percent*

TABLE 12. SCHOOL BOARD AUTHORITY AND SATISFACTION FOR ALL SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENTS, BY DISTRICT ENROLLMENT SIZE, AND BY NUMBER OF YEARS ON SCHOOL BOARD

QUESTION 9. WOULD YOU SAY YOUR SCHOOL BOARD'S AUTHORITY HAS INCREASED, STAYED ABOUT THE SAME, OR DECREASED OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS

	All School Board Presidents	By Enrollment Size			By Number of Years on School Board			
		10,000+	2,500-9,999	Less than 2,500	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-9 years	10+ years
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Increased	20	21	17	20	24	21	19	15
Decreased	58	53	57	58	61	60	57	54
Stayed the same	22	26	27	21	15	19	24	31

IF DECREASED, WHO NOW HAS THE AUTHORITY YOUR SCHOOL BOARD HAD?

Superintendent	9	7	10	9	15	6	20	3
Principal	*	0	1	0	2	0	0	0
Teachers	6	2	7	6	20	1	6	5
Parents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
State	89	92	86	89	74	95	84	93
Federal	6	8	7	6	*	6	8	9

QUESTION 10. DO YOU THINK THE AUTHORITY OF YOUR SCHOOL BOARD SHOULD BE GREATER, ABOUT THE SAME, OR LESS THAN IT IS?

Greater	35	39	37	34	31	30	37	41
About the same	63	59	64	64	66	67	62	59
Less	2	2	1	2	3	3	1	*

PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENTS WHO SAY THEY ARE SATISFIED WITH THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS OF THEIR JOBS AS SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENT LISTED BELOW.

Relationship with superintendent	92	94	94	92	87	94	93	96
Relationship with school bd. members	94	93	92	95	91	93	93	96
Relationship with other central office staff	96	97	97	96	93	95	98	98
Relationship with teacher groups	84	88	83	84	82	88	80	83
Relationship with parents of students	93	92	95	92	91	91	94	95
Relationship with civic leaders in the community	87	89	90	87	87	88	81	91
Relationship with state department of education	60	59	56	62	56	57	60	70
Present curriculum	84	88	86	83	78	84	81	91
Present textbooks	83	84	84	84	77	82	83	90

** Less than 0.5 percent*

TABLE 13. SCHOOL BOARD AUTHORITY AND SATISFACTION BY JOB HELD IN EDUCATION, BY POLITICAL VIEWS, AND BY SEX

	By Ever Held Job in Education			By Political Views			By Sex	
	Elementary/ Secondary	College/ University	None	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Male	Female
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
QUESTION 9. WOULD YOU SAY YOUR SCHOOL BOARD'S AUTHORITY HAS INCREASED, STAYED ABOUT THE SAME, OR DECREASED OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS?								
Increased	21	24	18	24	20	18	18	23
Decreased	57	49	60	63	58	57	57	60
Stayed the same	22	27	22	13	22	25	25	17
IF DECREASED, WHO NOW HAS THE AUTHORITY YOUR SCHOOL BOARD HAD?								
Superintendent	14	13	9	00	12	8	8	15
Principal	0	0	*	00	*	0	*	0
Teachers	7	13	5	00	5	6	5	11
Parents	0	0	0	00	0	0	0	0
State	81	75	92	00	89	90	90	85
Federal	6	0	7	00	10	3	6	9
QUESTION 10. DO YOU THINK THE AUTHORITY OF YOUR SCHOOL BOARD SHOULD BE GREATER, ABOUT THE SAME, OR LESS THAN IT IS?								
Greater	35	26	35	32	30	41	38	28
About the same	62	73	64	68	69	56	60	71
Less	3	3	1	*	1	3	2	1
PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENTS WHO SAY THEY ARE SATISFIED WITH THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS OF THEIR JOBS AS SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENT LISTED BELOW.								
Relationship with superintendent	93	92	92	90	93	94	93	92
Relationship with school bd. members	95	99	93	98	94	93	93	96
Relationship with other central office staff	98	96	95	99	96	97	96	96
Relationship with teacher groups	84	85	84	90	83	84	83	86
Relationship with parents of students	91	94	92	94	93	93	90	97
Relationship with civic leaders in the community	90	76	88	89	88	88	86	91
Relationship with state department of education	63	57	59	64	58	61	58	66
Present curriculum	81	73	86	82	87	83	83	86
Present textbooks	80	78	86	78	84	83	83	83

** Less than 0.5 percent*

TABLE 14. WHICH LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT SHOULD INFLUENCE LOCAL SCHOOLS?

QUESTION 18. WOULD YOU LIKE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN WASHINGTON TO HAVE MORE INFLUENCE, LESS INFLUENCE, OR ABOUT THE SAME AMOUNT OF INFLUENCE, ON IMPROVING THE LOCAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS? HOW ABOUT THE STATE GOVERNMENT? HOW ABOUT THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT?

	All School Board Presidents	Superintendents/a	Public Principals/a	National Totals/b
	%	%	%	%
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT				
More influence	7	9	10	37/a
Less influence	59	56	56	39
STATE GOVERNMENT				
More influence	9	20	22	55
Less influence	62	49	43	21
LOCAL GOVERNMENT				
More influence	54	50	48	62
Less influence	13	14	17	15

Source: /a The National Center for Education Information's survey of 1,704 superintendents, 1,349 public school principals, and 524 private school principals conducted between October 20 and December 20, 1987.

/b The Gallup Organization surveyed 1,571 adults (18 years of age and older) April 10-13, 1987 for the Phi Delta Kappa/ Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools.

Chapter 3: Attitudes About Public Schools

The general public does not give the schools, in either the nation as a whole or the ones in their own communities, very high marks.

The presidents of school boards make a clear distinction between what they think about schools in the nation as a whole and what they think about the schools in their own jurisdictions. They are much more in agreement with the general public about schools as a whole, and more in alignment with school administrators concerning the schools in their own communities.

When asked, "Do you think the educational standards in our schools have improved in recent years, stayed the same, or become worse?", 29 percent of the school board presidents said , "Become worse", and 43 percent said they had improved. This compares with 49 percent of adults polled in a TIME/Yankelovich Clancy Schulman survey in February, 1987, who responded, "Become worse" and 41 percent who said standards had improved.

When NCEI asked the same question in its survey of superintendents and principals in fall 1987, 81 percent of superintendents and 72 percent of public school principals said standards in our schools had improved.

However, when school board presidents were asked, "Would you say that the public schools in your community have improved, from say, five years ago, gotten worse, or stayed about the same?", 74 percent of them said the schools in their own communities had improved, and only five percent said they had gotten worse.

The general public was asked this question by the Gallup Organization in spring 1988: 29 percent said schools in their own communities had improved, and 19 percent said they had gotten worse. Thirty-nine percent of the parents of public school students responded that schools had improved, compared with 16 percent who said they had gotten worse. Only 25 percent of adults who had no children in school said in the Gallup poll that schools in their communities had improved in the last five years. (This is significant in view of the fact that two-thirds of households in this nation today do not have children under 18

years of age living in them.)

When superintendents and principals were asked by NCEI in fall 1987 if the schools in their own communities had improved, gotten worse or stayed about the same in the last five years, 87 percent of the superintendents and 75 percent of the principals said they had improved.

HOW U.S. COMPARES INTERNATIONALLY

Again, when presidents of school boards are asked what they think about the nation as a whole, including how our system of public education in the U.S. compares with other countries, they are much more in line with what the general public thinks than they are what the school administrators think.

When asked if they think the U.S. system of public education is strong or weak in comparison with that in Japan, Great Britain, West Germany, and other major western countries, 55 percent of school board presidents and 48 percent of the public think our's is strong. This compares with 85 percent of superintendents and 67 percent of public school principals who think the U.S. system of public education is strong in comparison with other countries.

GRADING THE SCHOOLS

The split between how school board presidents rate public schools nationally and those in their own communities holds up in the grades they give schools. Only 2 percent of the presidents give public schools nationally an "A". Yet, 23 percent of them give the schools in their own communities an "A". An additional 56 percent give the schools in their own communities a "B". Fewer than a third (31 percent) of school board presidents give schools nationally a "B".

Only 3 percent of the adults surveyed by the Gallup Organization in April, 1988, gave schools nationally an "A", and only nine percent gave the schools in their own communities an "A". Three percent of parents of public school students gave schools nationally an "A", and 13 percent gave the schools in their own communities an "A".

Five percent of superintendents surveyed in fall 1987 by NCEI gave schools nationally an "A", and 32 percent gave the schools in their communities the highest grade. An additional 66 percent of superintendents assigned a grade of "B" to schools nationally and 58 percent gave "B"s to their own schools.

Presidents of school boards in the larger school districts think more positively about schools in the nation as a whole than do those in the smaller districts. Fifty-six percent of the presidents in districts that enroll 10,000 or more students, compared with 42 percent in those enrolling fewer than 2,500 students, think educational standards have improved in recent years.

School board presidents in suburban and smaller urban areas give the schools in their communities higher marks than do presidents in other types of communities. Eighty-six percent of presidents in suburban communities and

82 percent of those in small urban areas, compared with 78 percent of those in rural areas, 67 percent in cities between 150,000 and 499,999 population and 60 percent in cities with populations of 500,000 or more, give the schools in their communities and "A" or "B".

TABLE 15. COMPARISONS BETWEEN ATTITUDES OF SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENTS, SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND THE PUBLIC CONCERNING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

QUESTION 12. DO YOU THINK THE EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS IN OUR SCHOOLS HAVE IMPROVED IN RECENT YEARS, STAYED THE SAME, OR BECOME WORSE?/WOULD YOU SAY THAT THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN YOUR COMMUNITY HAVE IMPROVED, FROM SAY, FIVE YEARS AGO, GOTTEN WORSE, OR STAYED ABOUT THE SAME?

	All School Board Presidents	Superintendents/a	Public Principals/a	National Totals/b	General Public/c Public School Parents	General Public/c Nonpublic School Parents	General Public/c No Children in School
	%	%	%	%			
Improved	43/74	81/87	72/75	41/29	NA/39	NA/36	NA/25
Stayed the same	23/21	14/10	18/20	5/37	NA/36	NA/25	NA/38
Become worse	29/5	4/1	8/4	49/19	NA/15	NA/25	NA/19
Not sure/Don't know	5/*	1/2	2/1	5/15	NA/9	NA/13	NA/18

QUESTION 13. HOW ABOUT THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE NATION AS A WHOLE? WHAT GRADE WOULD YOU GIVE THE SCHOOLS NATIONALLY -- A,B,C,D, OR FAIL?

	All School Board Presidents	Superintendents/a	Public Principals/a	National Totals	General Public/c Public School Parents	General Public/c Non-Public School Parents	General Public/c No Children in School
A + B	33	71	60	23	25	18	21
A	2	5	5	3	3	2	2
B	31	66	55	20	22	16	19
C	51	25	32	48	52	57	46
D	9	1	2	13	12	16	13
Fail	2	*	*	3	2	2	4
Don't know	5	3	5	13	9	7	16

QUESTION 14. HOW ABOUT THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN YOUR COMMUNITY? WHAT GRADE WOULD YOU GIVE THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN YOUR COMMUNITY -- A,B,C,D, OR FAIL?

A + B	79	90	88	40	51	33	37
A	23	32	31	9	13	8	8
B	56	58	57	31	38	25	29
C	18	8	10	34	36	37	34
D	1	1	2	10	8	21	10
Fail	0	*	*	4	4	4	4
Don't know	1	*	*	12	1	5	15

** Less than 0.5 percent*

Source: /a The National Center for Education Information's survey of 1,704 superintendents, 1,349 public school principals, and 524 private school principals conducted between October 20 and December 20, 1987.

/b TIME, Yankelovich, Clancy, Shulman survey conducted Feb. 17-18, 1987

/c The Gallup Organization surveyed 2,118 adults (18 years of age and older) April 8-10, 1988 for the Phi Delta Kappa/ Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools.

TABLE 16. SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENTS' ATTITUDES ABOUT SCHOOLS BY DISTRICT ENROLLMENT SIZE, METROPOLITAN STATUS OF COMMUNITY AND COMMUNITY INCOME LEVEL.

QUESTION 12. DO YOU THINK THE EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS IN OUR SCHOOLS HAVE IMPROVED IN RECENT YEARS, STAYED THE SAME, OR BECOME WORSE?

	By Enrollment Size			By Metro Status of Community				By Community Income		
	10,000+	2,500-9,999	Less than 2,500	Pop. 500,000+	Pop. 150,000-499,999	Other Urban	Suburban	Rural	Low	Medium	High
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Improved	56	43	42	40	53	42	54	39	37	46	40
Stayed the same	23	25	22	25	18	32	19	23	29	20	22
Become worse	19	27	30	35	27	23	22	33	32	28	20
Not sure	1	5	5	0	2	4	5	5	2	5	18

QUESTION 13. HOW ABOUT THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE NATION AS A WHOLE? WHAT GRADE WOULD YOU GIVE THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS NATIONALLY -- A,B,C,D, OR FAIL?

A + B	39	31	33	40	31	38	34	32	28	35	32
A	1	1	2	0	0	5	0	2	1	2	0
B	38	30	31	40	31	33	34	30	27	33	32
C	49	56	50	55	49	49	51	52	56	49	49
D	6	7	9	5	14	7	8	9	9	8	8
Fail	1	1	2	0	2	0	1	3	4	1	2
Don't know	5	6	5	0	4	6	6	5	4	5	8

QUESTION 14. HOW ABOUT THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN YOUR COMMUNITY? WHAT WOULD YOU GIVE THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN YOUR COMMUNITY -- A,B,C,D, OR FAIL?

A + B	79	83	79	60	67	82	86	78	67	84	94
A	27	23	23	0	18	27	32	20	14	25	61
B	52	60	56	60	49	55	54	58	53	59	33
C	19	16	19	40	31	17	12	21	29	14	6
D	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	1	3	0	0
Fail	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Don't know	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0

TABLE 17. ATTITUDES OF SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENTS, SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, AND THE PUBLIC REGARDING HOW THE UNITED STATES COMPARES WITH JAPAN AND OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES.

QUESTION 17. NOW LET'S COMPARE THE U.S. TO JAPAN, GREAT BRITAIN, WEST GERMANY, AND OTHER MAJOR WESTERN COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD ON A NUMBER OF FACTORS. WOULD YOU SAY TODAY THAT THE UNITED STATES IS VERY STRONG, STRONG, WEAK, OR VERY WEAK COMPARED TO OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS?

	All School Board Presidents	Superintendents/a	Public Principals/a	National Totals/b
	%	%	%	%
OUR SYSTEM OF PUBLIC EDUCATION				
Strong	55	85	67	48
Weak	39	11	18	47
Not sure	6	4	4	5
PRODUCTION OF QUALITY PRODUCTS				
Strong	45	64	56	56
Weak	49	33	38	41
Not sure	5	4	5	3
TECHNICAL INNOVATION				
Strong	61	78	73	70
Weak	34	18	22	23
Not sure	5	4	2	7
OVERALL STANDARD OF LIVING				
Strong	87	96	94	86
Weak	10	1	2	11
Not sure	3	2	2	3

Source: /a The National Center for Education Information's survey of 1,704 superintendents, 1,349 public school principals, and 524 private school principals conducted between October 20 and December 20, 1987.

/b Times Mirror Study of the American Electorate conducted by the Gallup Organization. Face to face personal interviews were conducted among a nationally representative sample of 4,244 adults April 25-May 10, 1987.

Chapter 4: Attitudes About Ways to Improve America's Educational System

Several proposals have been advanced in recent years, as ways to improve America's educational system. They include:

- ❑ Re-structuring to allow greater autonomy at the local level, more decision-making authority at the school-building level, teacher "empowerment" -- giving teachers greater authority in the running of schools, and involving parents and students more directly in the running of schools.

- ❑ Recruiting educated adults who have experience in careers other than education as teachers and as administrators.

- ❑ Making the school year and school day longer.

- ❑ Demanding more accountability from students, as well as from schools.

NCEI asked school board presidents whether they strongly agreed, somewhat agreed, somewhat disagreed or strongly disagreed with 10 separate reform proposals. We analyzed their responses across a number of categories -- the size of the school district, metropolitan status of the community, whether or not they had ever held a job in education at the elementary, secondary or college level, by the number of years they have served on the school board, by their political orientation and by their highest level of education (See Tables 18-21).

RECRUIT ADULTS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCE IN CAREERS OTHER THAN EDUCATION INTO TEACHING

"Recruiting adults who have experience in careers other than education into teaching" was the second most universally agreed upon way to improve America's educational system. It was second only to "Demand that a student perform at grade level before he or she is passed on to the next grade."

Three-fourths of all school board presidents said they favored bringing people from other careers into teaching. Only 5 percent said they "strongly disagreed" with the proposal, and 5 percent said they were not sure.

Recruiting adults -- experienced in fields other than education -- into teaching was more popular in the larger districts, and in all types of urban and suburban communities. Eighty-seven percent of presidents of school boards in districts that enroll 10,000 or more students, and 86 percent of those in districts enrolling between 2,500 and 9,999, favored the proposal, compared with 71 percent of those in the districts that enroll 2,500 or fewer students.

There were no significant differences in responses to this proposal by whether or not the school board president had ever held a job in education or by how many years he or she had served on the school board.

Presidents with a bachelor's degree or more favored recruiting experienced adults from other careers into teaching considerably more than did those who have less than a bachelor's degree. Nearly nine out of ten (86 percent) of school board presidents who have a J.D., M.D. or Ph.D., 78 percent who have a Master's or other postbaccalaureate degree, and 82 percent of those with a bachelor's degree agree with the proposal. This compares with 67 percent of school board presidents, who have less than a bachelor's degree, who said they agreed recruiting adults, who have experience in careers other than education, into teaching would improve America's educational system.

Eighty-nine percent of the school board presidents who identified their views on most political matters as "Liberal," favored the proposal, compared with 75 percent of those who said they considered themselves "Moderate," and 72 percent of those who identified themselves as "Conservative."

RECRUIT ADULTS FROM OTHER CAREERS INTO POSITIONS AS SUPERINTENDENTS AND PRINCIPALS

While strongly favoring recruiting adults from other careers into teaching, the school board presidents are less enthusiastic about recruiting managers from other careers into school administration. Fewer than half (48 percent) of the presidents agree that this would improve America's educational system.

There were no significant differences among any of the categories of school board presidents on this item, except for those who had been a school board member for 10 or more years.

Only 39 percent of presidents of school boards who had served as a member of their boards for 10 or more years favored the proposal to bring adults experienced as administrators in other careers into the educational system as superintendents or principals. The strongest support came from presidents who had been members of their school boards for 1-to-3 years (53 percent).

MORE AUTONOMY AT THE SCHOOL-BUILDING LEVEL AND TEACHER EMPOWERMENT

Allowing individual schools to determine how they will operate was favored by nearly two-thirds of all school board presidents. However, only one-third said they agreed "giving the teachers greater authority in the running of schools" would improve America's educational system.

On no reform proposals were there greater differences among the sub-categories of school board presidents than on school-building autonomy and teacher empowerment.

While 68 percent of school board presidents in districts that enroll fewer than 2,500 students favor "Let each individual school decide how the school will operate," only 45 percent of those in the districts that enroll 10,000 or more students and 48 percent of those in districts that enroll between 2,500 and 9,999 agree with the statement.

It should be remembered that three-fourths of the school board presidents in the United States are in districts that enroll fewer than 2,500 students and a large proportion of these are in districts that have only one or two schools in the entire district.

It is also noteworthy that, while the districts that enroll 10,000 or more students account for fewer than 5 percent of all the school districts in the nation, they represent nearly half of all the students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools.

The school board presidents in these largest school districts, while not as much in favor of letting individual schools decide how they will run, are more in favor of giving teachers greater authority in the running of schools.

Slightly more than half (54 percent) of presidents of school boards in districts that enroll 10,000 or more students said they agreed that giving teachers greater authority in the running of schools would improve America's educational system. This compares with 31 percent of presidents in districts enrolling fewer than 2,500 students and 40 percent of those in districts that enroll between 2,500 and 9,999.

Noticeable differences on these proposals also exist among school board presidents by metropolitan status of their communities. While only 27 percent of the presidents in rural communities (where about a fourth of all students are enrolled) agreed with empowering teachers, 70 percent of those in inner cities with populations of 500,000 or more (where another fourth of students are enrolled) agreed with the proposal. About half of the presidents in the other types of communities favor giving teachers more authority in the running of schools -- 47 percent in inner cities with populations between 150,000 and 499,999, 51 percent in other urban areas and 41 percent in suburban communities.

There is a similar split on the proposal to "Let each individual school decide how the school will operate." Seventy percent of presidents in the largest inner cities and 68 percent of those in rural areas favor this proposal. Again, about a half of those in other types of communities are in favor -- 43 percent of

those in inner cities with populations between 150,000 and 499,999, 53 percent in other urban areas, and 54 percent in suburban areas.

Presidents who have never held any job in education are more favorable to local school autonomy and less favorable to teacher empowerment than those who have held jobs in education. Two-thirds (66 percent) of school board presidents who have never held any job in education favor this proposal, compared with 54 percent who have held a job as a teacher or administrator in elementary schools and 47 percent who have held a job as a professor or administrator in a college or university.

While 42 percent of presidents who have held a job in elementary and secondary education and 38 percent who have held a job in postsecondary education favor giving teachers greater authority in the running of schools, 32 percent of those who have never had a job in education do.

Presidents who have served on their current school boards six or fewer years are more favorable to local school autonomy than those who have been on the school board longer.

Forty-five percent of those who have served 1-3 years as a school board member are in favor of giving teachers greater authority in the running of schools. This compares with only 26 percent of those who have served as a member of the school board for 10 or more years.

Conservative school board presidents favor local school autonomy most and teacher empowerment least. Two-thirds (66 percent) of school board presidents who say they are "Conservative" agree that letting each individual school decide how it will operate would improve our educational system, but only 28 percent of them think giving teachers greater authority in the running of schools would.

One the other end of the political spectrum, 57 percent of the school board presidents who identify themselves as "Liberal" agree with teacher empowerment and 56 percent agree with individual school autonomy.

There were no significant differences on these proposals, among the groups of school board presidents, by highest level of education attained. About two-thirds of all groups favored school autonomy and only about a third favored teacher empowerment.

Likewise, there were no significant differences between men and women presidents on school autonomy. However, 45 percent of women presidents, compared with 29 percent of men presidents, favored teachers having greater authority in the running of schools.

While two-thirds (62 percent) of school board presidents agreed that individual school autonomy would improve America's educational system, only a third (34 percent) agreed that giving teachers greater authority in the running of those schools would.

EXTEND THE SCHOOL DAY/YEAR

About half of the school board presidents agreed that extending the school year (51 percent) and extending the school day (48 percent) would improve America's educational system.

The differences among the categories of school board presidents on the suggestions that the school day or school year be extended were significant.

While nearly two-thirds of the board presidents in the largest districts favored lengthening the school year (65 percent for those enrolling 10,000 or more students and 64 percent of those enrolling between 2,500 and 9,999), fewer than half of the presidents in districts that enroll fewer than 2,500 students (47 percent) agreed with the proposal.

There was a similar gap between the larger and smaller districts on the proposal to extend the school day. Sixty-four percent of the largest districts, 59 percent of the mid-sized ones and 45 percent of the smallest, agreed extending the school day would improve our educational system.

It came as no surprise that presidents of boards in rural communities disagreed with these proposals far more than those in suburban or urban areas. It is noteworthy, in this context, that approximately two-thirds of the school districts in this nation are in rural communities.

The more education a board president has the more he favors extending the the school year and the school day. Two-thirds (66 percent) of presidents who have a J.D., M.D. or Ph.D. agree extending the school year would improve America's educational system. This compares with 61 percent of those who have a Master's or other baccalaureate degree, 52 percent who have a bachelor's degree, and 44 percent of those presidents who have less than a bachelor's degree.

Women presidents are more in favor of extending the school year (59 percent) than are men (49 percent). The sexes are about even for extending the school day -- 50 percent for women and 48 percent for men.

Another interesting difference showed up by age groups. There is an inverse correlation between favoring extending the school year and the age of the school board presidents. Two-thirds (64 percent) of the presidents 60 years and older agree extending the school day would improve America's educational system. This compares with 48 percent of those in their thirties, 50 percent in their forties and 56 percent in their fifties.

Those presidents who consider themselves "Liberal" agree with extending the school day more than those of other political persuasions. Sixty-one percent who consider themselves "Liberal," compared with 55 percent who consider themselves "Moderate," and 45 percent of "Conservatives," favor this proposal.

INVOLVE PARENTS MORE DIRECTLY IN THE RUNNING OF SCHOOLS

About two-thirds of the school board presidents across all groups said they

agreed that involving parents more directly in the running of schools would improve our educational system.

The strongest support came from those in the largest inner cities and from presidents who are newest to their school boards -- 85 percent of presidents in inner cities with populations of 500,000 or more and 73 percent of presidents who had been members of their boards 1-to-3 years agreed with this proposal.

Women presidents favor the proposal more than men -- 70 percent of women, compared with 61 percent of men.

TABLE 18. PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENTS WHO AGREE THE FOLLOWING REFORM PROPOSALS WOULD IMPROVE AMERICA'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, ALL AND BY ENROLLMENT SIZE AND METROPOLITAN STATUS OF COMMUNITY

	All School Board Presidents	By Enrollment Size			By Metro Status of Community				
		10,000+	2,500-9,999	Less than 2,500	Pop. 500,000+	Pop. 150,000-499,999	Other Urban	Suburban	Rural
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Let each individual school decide how the school will operate	62	45	48	68	70	43	53	54	68
Give the teachers greater authority in the running of schools	34	54	40	31	70	47	51	41	27
Involve parents more directly in the running of schools	63	62	66	63	85	65	68	63	62
Involve secondary school students more directly in the running of high schools	29	36	33	28	60	29	43	33	25
Extend the school year	51	65	64	47	45	76	60	65	44
Extend the school day	48	64	59	45	55	56	50	67	41
Recruit adults who have experience in careers other than education into teaching	75	87	86	71	70	85	79	81	72
Recruit adults who have experience as managers/ administrators in careers other than education into positions as superintendents and principals	48	49	53	46	35	56	49	48	48
Demand that a student perform at grade level before he/she is passed on to next grade	84	81	83	85	95	87	80	90	83
Allow greater flexibility at the school-building level in determining what and how students are taught	64	66	55	66	80	59	66	59	64

TABLE 19. PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENTS WHO AGREE THE FOLLOWING REFORM PROPOSALS WOULD IMPROVE AMERICA'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, BY JOB HELD IN EDUCATION AND BY YEARS ON SCHOOL BOARD

	By Ever Held Job in Education			By Number of Years on School Board			
	Elementary/ Secondary	College/ University	None	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-9 years	10+ years
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Let each individual school decide how the school will operate	54	47	66	65	69	56	57
Give the teachers greater authority in the running of schools	42	38	32	45	33	36	26
Involve parents more directly in the running of schools	66	67	62	73	62	60	60
Involve secondary school students more directly in the running of high schools	38	30	26	36	30	24	27
Extend the school year	52	62	49	50	54	51	50
Extend the school day	45	53	48	42	49	50	51
Recruit adults who have experience in careers other than education into teaching	75	78	75	78	77	73	72
Recruit adults who have experience as managers/administrators in careers other than education into positions as superintendents and principals	45	52	48	53	50	50	39
Demand that a student perform at grade level before he/she is passed on to next grade	78	90	87	86	87	80	82
Allow greater flexibility at the school-building level in determining what and how students are taught	70	62	62	67	65	58	66

TABLE. 20. PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENTS WHO AGREE THE FOLLOWING REFORM PROPOSALS WOULD IMPROVE AMERICA'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, BY POLITICAL VIEWS AND BY HIGHEST DEGREE HELD

	By Political Views			By Highest Degree Held			
	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	J.D.,M.D. Ph.D.	Master's & Other Post-baccalaureate	Bachelor's	Less than Bachelor's
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Let each individual school decide how the school will operate	56	61	66	67	55	62	65
Give the teachers greater authority in the running of schools	57	33	28	32	34	41	29
Involve parents more directly in the running of schools	64	66	59	54	70	62	63
Involve secondary school students more directly in the running of high schools	46	31	21	20	35	29	29
Extend the school year	61	55	45	66	61	52	44
Extend the school day	47	54	43	59	56	51	41
Recruit adults who have experience in careers other than education into teaching	89	75	72	86	78	82	67
Recruit adults who have experience as managers/administrators in careers other than education into positions as superintendents and principals	47	48	50	46	52	51	45
Demand that a student perform at grade level before he/she is passed on to next grade	87	83	86	86	88	83	84
Allow greater flexibility at the school-building level in determining what and how students are taught	63	62	68	60	63	66	63

TABLE 21. PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENTS WHO AGREE THE FOLLOWING REFORM PROPOSALS WOULD IMPROVE AMERICA'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, BY SEX AND BY AGE GROUPS

	By Sex		By Age (in years)			
	Male	Female	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Let each individual school decide how the school will operate	62	63	77	62	51	65
Give the teachers greater authority in the running of schools	29	45	27	39	30	39
Involve parents more directly in the running of schools	61	70	60	66	60	62
Involve secondary school students more directly in the running of high schools	30	45	26	30	31	30
Extend the school year	49	59	48	50	56	64
Extend the school day	48	50	35	49	56	52
Recruit adults who have experience in careers other than education into teaching	73	80	76	77	71	70
Recruit adults who have experience as managers/administrators in careers other than education into positions as superintendents and principals	48	47	47	50	45	45
Demand that a student perform at grade level before he/she is passed on to next grade	86	81	85	86	82	80
Allow greater flexibility at the school-building level in determining what and how students are taught	63	67	67	62	64	65

Chapter 5: Choice

On no issue in the NCEI survey were there greater differences between the general public's views and those of all types of school officials, including school board presidents, than those pertaining to "choice" -- i.e., giving parents the power to choose the schools their children will attend.

When the public was asked in spring 1987 by the Gallup Organization, "Do you think that parents in your community should or should not have the right to choose which local schools their children should attend?", 71 percent of the general public said they should. More than three-fourths (76 percent) of parents of public school children said they thought parents should have the right to choose which schools in their local communities their children should attend.

Only 36 percent of school board presidents surveyed in winter 1988-89 and 31 percent of public school superintendents surveyed in fall 1987 by NCEI said "Yes" to the question of parents having the right to send their children to the school of their choice.

When the responses of the school board presidents were analyzed by school district size and by type of community, some slight differences showed up. Thirty-seven percent of the presidents in the largest districts and 39 percent of those in the smallest say they favor parental choice, compared with 29 percent of those in the districts that enroll between 2,500 and 9,999 students. It is important to keep in mind that a large proportion of the school districts that enroll fewer than 2,500 students only have one school.

By metropolitan status of the community, choice is slightly more popular among board presidents in the largest inner cities (53 percent) and in rural communities (40 percent), and least popular in suburban regions (28 percent).

When the responses to the question of whether or not parents should have the right to choose which school in the local community their children should attend are analyzed by number of years the president has served on the school board and by highest level of education attained, some differences showed up.

Those presidents who have served on the school board 10 or more years are

most opposed to parental choice (57 percent), and those least opposed are presidents who have been on the school board 1-to-3 years (43 percent). But, 51 percent of the presidents who have been board members 4-to-6 years oppose parental choice.

Presidents holding either a J.D., M.D. or Ph.D. are more favorable to parents having choice over which schools their children attend (43 percent) than those whose highest level of education is a bachelor's degree (33 percent), those who have less than a bachelor's degree (38 percent), or those with a Master's or other postbaccalaureate degree (39 percent).

Those presidents who identify themselves as "Conservative" or "Moderate" on most political matters are slightly more in favor of choice than those who identify themselves as "Liberal" -- 39 percent, 36 percent and 29 percent, respectively.

VOUCHERS

The general public and parents of public school children are also more in favor of vouchers than are school board presidents, superintendents, and public school principals.

The question asked of all groups was, "In some nations, the government allots a certain amount of money for each child's education. The parents can then send the child to any public, parochial, or private school they choose. This is called the 'voucher system.' Would you like to see such an idea adopted in this country?"

Forty-four percent of the general public and 49 percent of parents of both public school children and of non-public school children said "Yes." This compares with 16 percent of school board presidents, 8 percent of superintendents, and 13 percent of public school principals, who said they favored vouchers.

When asked if they thought vouchers would help or hurt the public schools in their own communities, 36 percent of the public, 38 percent of parents of children in public schools, 37 percent of non-public school parents said the voucher system would help. This compares with 11 percent of school board presidents, 12 percent of superintendents, and 11 percent of public school principals, who said vouchers would help the public schools in their communities.

Among school board presidents, opposition to vouchers was strongest for those who consider themselves liberal on most political matters (86 percent). However, opposition to vouchers was very strong among all subgroups of presidents of school boards. The groups least opposed to the notion of vouchers are those in the largest inner cities and those who consider themselves "Conservative" on most political matters. There is also an inverse correlation between level of education and opposition to vouchers and a direct correlation between numbers of years served on the school board and opposition to vouchers.

PARENTS HAVING MORE SAY IN THE CURRICULUM

The public and parents of children in school say parents of public school children should have more say regarding the curriculum, i.e., the courses offered. Public school authorities, on the other hand, think parents have about the right amount of say concerning the curriculum.

While 45 percent of the general public and 51 percent of public school parents said parents should have more say in curricular matters, 16 percent of school board presidents, 14 percent of superintendents and 13 percent of public school principals said parents should have more say regarding what courses are offered.

More than three-fourths of the school officials said parents have the right amount of say in determining the curriculum. Seventy-nine percent of school board presidents, 80 percent of superintendents, and 76 percent of public school principals, compared with 37 percent of the general public and 41 percent of public school parents, think parents have the right amount of say regarding what courses are offered.

TABLE 22. COMPARISONS BETWEEN SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENTS, SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC CONCERNING PARENTAL CHOICE AND VOUCHERS

QUESTION 27. DO YOU THINK THAT PARENTS IN YOUR COMMUNITY SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT HAVE THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE WHICH LOCAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS THEIR CHILDREN SHOULD ATTEND?

	School Board Presidents	Superintendents/a	Public Principals/a	National Totals	General Public/b Public School Parents	General Public/b Non-Public School Parents	General Public/b No Children in School
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	36	31	37	71	76	81	68
No	51	68	60	20	21	15	20
Don't Know	13	1	2	9	3	4	12

QUESTION 28. IN SOME NATIONS, THE GOVERNMENT ALLOTS A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF MONEY FOR EACH CHILD'S EDUCATION. THE PARENTS CAN THEN SEND THE CHILD TO ANY PUBLIC, PAROCHIAL, OR PRIVATE SCHOOL THEY CHOOSE. THIS IS CALLED THE "VOUCHER SYSTEM." WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE SUCH AN IDEA ADOPTED IN THIS COUNTRY?

Yes	16	8	13	44	49	49	42
No	71	86	75	41	40	46	42
Don't know	13	6	12	15	11	5	16

QUESTION 29. HOW ABOUT THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN YOUR COMMUNITY? DO YOU THINK THE VOUCHER SYSTEM WOULD HELP OR HURT THE LOCAL SCHOOLS?

Help	11	12	11	36	38	37	35
Hurt	63	70	64	42	44	49	41
Don't know	26	18	24	22	18	14	24

QUESTION 30. DO YOU FEEL THAT PARENTS OF PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS SHOULD HAVE MORE SAY, LESS SAY, OR DO THEY HAVE ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF SAY REGARDING THE CURRICULUM, I.E., THE COURSES OFFERED?

More say	16	14	13	45	51	65	40
Less say	3	5	9	8	5	4	10
Right amount	79	80	76	37	41	26	37
Ddn't know	2	1	2	10	3	5	13

Source: /a The National Center for Education Information's survey of 1,704 superintendents, 1,349 public school principals, and 524 private school principals conducted between October 20 and December 20, 1987.

/b The Gallup Organization surveyed 1,571 adults (18 years of age and older) April 10-13, 1987 for the Phi Delta Kappa/ Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools.

TABLE 23. ATTITUDES CONCERNING CHOICE AND VOUCHERS BY DISTRICT ENROLLMENT SIZE AND BY METROPOLITAN STATUS OF COMMUNITY

QUESTION 27. DO YOU THINK THAT PARENTS IN YOUR COMMUNITY SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT HAVE THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE WHICH LOCAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS THEIR CHILDREN SHOULD ATTEND?

	By Enrollment Size			By Metro Status of Community				
	10,000+	2,500-9,999	Less than 2,500	Pop. 500,000+	Pop. 150,000-499,999	Other Urban	Suburban	Rural
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	37	29	39	53	32	38	28	40
No	56	64	46	31	62	56	61	45
Don't know	7	7	15	16	6	6	11	15

QUESTION 28. IN SOME NATIONS, THE GOVERNMENT ALLOWS A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF MONEY FOR EACH CHILD'S EDUCATION. THE PARENTS CAN THEN SEND THE CHILD TO ANY PUBLIC, PAROCHIAL, OR PRIVATE SCHOOL THEY CHOOSE. THIS IS CALLED THE "VOUCHER SYSTEM." WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE SUCH AN IDEA ADOPTED IN THIS COUNTRY?

Yes	14	12	17	45	4	12	9	19
No	80	80	67	50	94	76	77	67
Don't know	6	8	15	5	2	12	14	14

QUESTION 29. HOW ABOUT THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN YOUR COMMUNITY? DO YOU THINK THE VOUCHER SYSTEM WOULD HELP OR HURT THE LOCAL SCHOOLS?

Help	11	11	11	30	4	11	9	12
Hurt	76	71	60	60	93	70	69	59
Don't know	14	18	29	10	3	19	22	29

QUESTION 30. DO YOU FEEL THAT PARENTS OF PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS SHOULD HAVE MORE SAY, LESS SAY, OR DO THEY HAVE ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF SAY REGARDING THE CURRICULUM, I.E., THE COURSES OFFERED?

More say	22	13	16	20	13	13	16	16
Less say	4	3	2	25	11	4	3	2
Right amount	75	83	78	55	76	80	79	79
Don't know	1	1	3	0	0	3	2	3

TABLE 24. ATTITUDES CONCERNING CHOICE AND VOUCHERS BY HIGHEST DEGREE HELD AND BY NUMBER OF YEARS AS MEMBER OF SCHOOL BOARD

QUESTION 27. DO YOU THINK THAT PARENTS IN YOUR COMMUNITY SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT HAVE THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE WHICH LOCAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS THEIR CHILDREN SHOULD ATTEND?

	By Highest Degree Held				By Number of Years on School Board			
	J.D.,M.D. Ph.D.	Master's or Other Post-baccalaureate	Bachelor's	Less than Bachelor's	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-9 years	10+ years
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	43	39	33	38	45	34	40	31
No	52	53	53	47	43	51	48	57
Don't know	5	8	14	15	12	15	12	12

QUESTION 28. IN SOME NATIONS, THE GOVERNMENT ALLOTS A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF MONEY FOR EACH CHILD'S EDUCATION. THE PARENTS CAN THEN SEND THE CHILD TO ANY PUBLIC, PAROCHIAL, OR PRIVATE SCHOOL THEY CHOOSE. THIS IS CALLED THE "VOUCHER SYSTEM." WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE SUCH AN IDEA ADOPTED IN THIS COUNTRY?

Yes	19	18	15	16	16	14	21	14
No	65	76	74	67	68	69	70	76
Don't know	16	6	11	17	16	16	9	10

QUESTION 29. HOW ABOUT THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN YOUR COMMUNITY? DO YOU THINK THE VOUCHER SYSTEM WOULD HELP OR HURT THE LOCAL SCHOOLS?

Help	17	11	11	10	14	10	14	8
Hurt	53	68	63	63	67	59	59	68
Don't know	31	21	26	27	19	31	27	24

QUESTION 30. DO YOU FEEL THAT PARENTS OF PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS SHOULD HAVE MORE SAY, LESS SAY, OR DO THEY HAVE ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF SAY REGARDING THE CURRICULUM, I.E., THE COURSES OFFERED?

More say	8	21	19	13	25	16	14	9
Less say	4	3	1	2	2	2	5	1
Right amount	87	75	76	82	71	80	76	89
Don't know	1	1	3	3	2	2	4	1

Chapter 6: Teachers

Teachers are given high marks by presidents of school boards, superintendents, principals, and parents of students in public schools. The general public is less generous with its rating of teachers.

Eighty percent of school board presidents, 89 percent of superintendents, 90 percent of public school principals, and 64 percent of parents of public school students assigned a grade of "A" or "B", when asked to grade the teachers in the public schools in their own communities. Fewer than half (49 percent) of the adults surveyed by the Gallup Organization, April 8-10, 1988, gave teachers in their communities an "A" or "B" grade.

There were no significant differences among groups of school board presidents in their grading of teachers, by enrollment size of their districts or by type of community.

QUALITY OF PEOPLE COMING INTO TEACHING

When asked about the quality of people coming into teaching today, 36 percent of school board presidents say it is better and 12 percent say "worse" than five years ago. This compares with 48 percent of superintendents and 45 percent of principals who said the quality of people coming into teaching today is better than it was five years ago. Eleven percent of superintendents and
13 percent of principals reported they thought it was worse.

More presidents of school boards in districts that enroll 10,000 or more students tend to think the quality of people coming into teaching today is better than it was five years ago (43 percent), than do those in the districts that enroll fewer than 2,500 students (35 percent).

Board presidents in the largest cities tend to rate teachers lower than those in other types of communities.

There were no real differences among presidents by how long they have served as a member of their boards, in the grades they gave teachers in their communities. Those who have been board members 1-to-3 years were less likely to say the quality of people coming into teaching today is better than five years ago than their more senior colleagues.

WHAT WOULD STRENGTHEN TEACHING AS A PROFESSION

Making teaching a true profession has dominated educational discussions in recent years. Several proposals have been advanced, as ways to strengthen teaching as a profession. NCEI asked school board presidents in its most recent survey whether or not they agreed that these proposals would strengthen teaching. We also asked the same question of superintendents and principals in 1987 and of teachers in 1986.

There are significant differences among these groups concerning what they think about some of the proposals for strengthening teaching as a profession, and striking agreement on others.

All groups -- except public school teachers surveyed in 1986 -- strongly agree that "Paying teachers based on job performance in addition to seniority and level of education" would strengthen teaching as a profession -- 87 percent of school board presidents, 83 percent of superintendents, 79 percent of public school principals, and 82 percent of private school teachers, compared with 69 percent of teachers in public schools.

The public is also strongly in favor of paying teachers based on performance. Eighty-four percent of the general public and 86 percent of parents of public school students surveyed by the Gallup Organization in April, 1988 said they favored "an increased pay scale for those teachers who have proved themselves particularly capable."

All school groups surveyed by NCEI also strongly favor having upward mobility within the ranks of teaching. Seventy-nine percent of presidents, 87 percent of superintendents, 88 percent of public school principals, 84 percent of private school teachers, and 80 percent of teachers in public schools, agreed that having "upward mobility within the ranks of teaching, i.e., career ladders," would strengthen teaching as a profession.

The least popular proposal was, "Let the market determine how much teachers get paid, e.g., pay people more in high demand areas such as math and science." Forty-nine percent of school board presidents and 42 percent of superintendents agreed this would make teaching a more true profession. Agreement dropped to 27 percent for public school principals, 26 percent for private school teachers, and 22 percent for teachers in public schools.

Popular among teachers, but not so popular among all types of school officials, is the proposal to "Give individual teachers more autonomy in determining what and how they teach." Seventy-seven percent of public school teachers and 69 percent of teachers in private schools agreed this would make teaching a more true profession.

Only 40 percent of superintendents, 44 percent of public school principals, and a slightly higher proportion of school board presidents (51 percent), agreed it would.

Giving teachers greater participation in decision-making at the district level was also not a very popular proposal among school board presidents (56 percent) or superintendents (63 percent). However, 79 percent of the public school principals agreed this proposal would enhance teaching as a profession.

All types of school officials were more in favor of the proposal, "Give teachers greater participation in decision-making at the school-building level." Seventy-five percent of the presidents of school boards, as well as 80 percent of superintendents and 87 percent of principals supported this suggestion.

Finally, school officials are more in favor of testing teachers than are teachers. Eighty-one percent of presidents, 72 percent of superintendents, and 71 percent of public school principals agreed that to "Introduce a proficiency exam for entry into teaching similar to the Bar Exam for lawyers or the CPA Exam for accountants" would strengthen teaching. Only 59 percent of public school teachers agreed.

The public strongly supports testing and standards for teachers. When the Gallup Organization asked in spring 1988, "In your opinion, should experienced teachers be periodically required to pass a statewide basic competency test in their subject area or areas, or not?", 86 percent of the general public and 89 percent of public school parents said, "Yes."

In the same poll, Gallup asked, "Would you favor or oppose the idea of establishing a national set of standards for the certification of public school teachers?", 86 percent of all adults and 89 percent of parents of public school students said they favored the idea.

TEACHING AS A PROFESSION PROPOSALS BY SELECTED CATEGORIES OF SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENTS

Striking differences exist among groups of school board presidents on some of the proposals for ways to strengthen teaching as a profession, when the data are analyzed by school district enrollment size, by type of community, and by the highest degree held by the president.

The only proposals on which there were no significant differences across all groups were: "Pay teachers based on job performance in addition to seniority and level of education" and "Introduce a proficiency exam for entry into teaching similar to the Bar Exam for lawyers or the CPA Exam for accountants."

On every other proposal, presidents of school boards in larger districts express more agreement than do those in the districts than enroll fewer than 2,500 students. (It should be noted, in this context, that, while 75 percent of all school board presidents in the United States are in districts that enroll fewer than 2,500 students, these districts collectively account for about a fourth of all students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools in the nation.)

Nowhere do the differences among presidents of boards in different-sized districts show up more than on the proposals for giving teachers greater participation in decision-making. While nearly three-fourths (72 percent) of presidents in districts that enroll 10,000 or more students agree that giving teachers greater participation in decision-making at the district level would strengthen teaching, as a profession, and 66 percent of those in districts enrolling between 2,500 and 9,999 agree, only 52 percent of presidents in the smallest districts enrolling fewer than 2,500 students, agree that it would.

Giving teachers greater participation in decision-making at the school-building level was favored by 84 percent of presidents in districts enrolling 10,000 or more students and 83 percent of those in districts that enroll between 2,500 and 9,999 students, compared with 73 percent of presidents of boards in districts enrolling fewer than 2,500 students.

While the differences are not as striking, the presidents in the largest districts also favored giving teachers more autonomy in determining what and how they teach (59 percent), more than those in the smaller districts (50 percent for the mid-sized districts, and 52 percent for the smallest).

By metropolitan status of community, presidents of school boards in large inner cities were more in favor of all proposals for strengthening teaching, as a profession, than those in other types of communities, with those in rural areas being the least in favor of them.

No significant differences among school board presidents showed up when responses were analyzed by highest degree held, except on the proposal to "Let the market determine how much teachers get paid." Nearly two-thirds of the presidents who have a J.D., M.D. or Ph.D. favor this proposal, compared with 49 percent of those who have a bachelor's, Master's or other baccalaureate degree, and 45 percent of those who have less than a bachelor's degree.

ALTERNATE ROUTES FOR CERTIFYING TEACHERS

Much has been made in recent years about finding ways to certify people who already have at least a bachelor's degree in a field other than education to become teachers. NCEI asked school board presidents in 1988-89, and superintendents and principals in fall 1987, their opinions about various ways such people could be brought into teaching.

It is noteworthy that only 15 percent of the presidents said, "They should go back to college and complete a traditional teacher education program and get fully certified before they are hired as teachers."

The most popular alternative among all school board presidents was, "They should be given an opportunity to teach, and if they demonstrate they know the subject matter and can teach effectively, they should be hired," (30 percent), followed by, "They should go through a one-year, paid internship that combines college coursework and on-site training in a school before being hired" (28 percent).

The other alternatives carried single-digit responses, including, "They

should go through a one-year unpaid internship that combines college coursework and on-site training in a school before being hired" (7 percent), and "They should go through one year of academic coursework in educational subjects based at a college before being hired" (7 percent).

The only real differences among all categories of school board presidents analyzed were those in the smallest districts and those with the least education. While still not a high percentage favoring already degreed people going back to college to complete a traditional teacher education program and getting fully certified before they are hired as teachers, 17 percent of those presidents in districts enrolling fewer than 2,500 students, compared with 10 percent in the other two enrollment categories, favored this option.

Twenty-two percent of those presidents whose highest level of education is less than a bachelor's degree favored this option, compared with 10-12 percent of those in each of the other groups.

No significant differences showed up in preferences for alternative ways to bring already degreed people into teaching, by number of years served as a member of the school board.

TABLE 25. ATTITUDES OF SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENTS, SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, AND THE PUBLIC REGARDING TEACHERS

QUESTION 15. WHAT GRADE WOULD YOU GIVE THE TEACHERS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN YOUR COMMUNITY – A,B,C,D, OR FAIL?

	All School Board Presidents	Superintendents/a	Public Principals/a	National Totals	General Public/b Public School Parents	General Public/b Non-Public School Parents	General Public/b No Children in School
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A + B	80	89	90	49	64	44	44
A	21	29	30	15	24	12	12
B	59	60	60	34	40	32	32
C	18	10	9	25	25	31	25
D	2	1	1	6	7	9	5
Fail	0	0	0	3	2	5	3
Don't know	*	*	*	17	2	11	23

QUESTION 32. WHAT ABOUT TEACHERS? WOULD YOU SAY THAT THE QUALITY OF PEOPLE COMING INTO TEACHING TODAY IS BETTER, FROM SAY, FIVE YEARS AGO, WORSE, OR ABOUT THE SAME?

Better	36	48	45
Worse	12	11	13
About the same	46	39	40
Don't know	6	1	2

** Less than 0.5 percent*

Source: /a The National Center for Education Information's survey of 1,704 superintendents, 1,349 public school principals, and 524 private school principals conducted between October 20 and December 20, 1987.

/b The Gallup Organization surveyed 2,118 adults (18 years of age and older) April 8-10, 1988 for the Phi Delta Kappa/ Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools.

TABLE 26. SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENTS' ATTITUDES ABOUT TEACHERS, BY DISTRICT ENROLLMENT SIZE AND BY METROPOLITAN STATUS OF COMMUNITY

QUESTION 15. WHAT GRADE WOULD YOU GIVE THE TEACHERS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN YOUR COMMUNITY – A,B,C,D, OR FAIL?

	By Enrollment Size			By Metro Status of Community				
	10,000+	2,500-9,999	Less than 2,500	Pop. 500,000+	Pop. 150,000-499,999	Other Urban	Suburban	Rural
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A + B	81	82	79	75	67	85	81	79
A	20	22	21	5	9	34	21	19
B	61	60	58	70	58	51	60	60
C	17	15	19	25	25	14	17	19
D	2	3	1	0	5	2	*	2
Fail	*	0	0	0	2	0	*	0
Don't know	*	0	*	0	0	0	1	0

QUESTION 32. WHAT ABOUT TEACHERS? WOULD YOU SAY THAT THE QUALITY OF PEOPLE COMING INTO TEACHING TODAY IS BETTER, FROM SAY, FIVE YEARS AGO, WORSE, OR ABOUT THE SAME?

Better	43	39	35	15	28	41	33	37
Worse	10	11	13	30	15	8	14	12
About the same	44	44	46	55	52	45	45	46
Don't know	5	7	5	0	5	6	7	5

SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENTS' ATTITUDES ABOUT TEACHERS – BY JOBS HELD IN EDUCATION AND BY NUMBER OF YEARS ON SCHOOL BOARD

QUESTION 15. WHAT GRADE WOULD YOU GIVE THE TEACHERS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN YOUR COMMUNITY – A,B,C,D, OR FAIL?

	By Jobs Held in Education			By Number of Years on School Board			
	Elementary/ Secondary	College/ University	None	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-9 years	10+ years
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A + B	80	70	80	77	84	76	82
A	22	18	21	23	23	17	20
B	58	52	59	54	61	59	62
C	19	27	18	21	14	22	17
D	1	3	1	1	1	2	1
Fail	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Don't know	0	0	*	0	1	*	0

QUESTION 32. WHAT ABOUT TEACHERS? WOULD YOU SAY THAT THE QUALITY OF PEOPLE COMING INTO TEACHING TODAY IS BETTER, FROM SAY, FIVE YEARS AGO, WORSE, OR ABOUT THE SAME?

Better	38	43	35	31	40	35	39
Worse	15	16	12	14	10	13	11
About the same	42	41	46	48	41	48	49
Don't know	5	*	6	7	9	4	1

** Less than 0.5 percent*

TABLE 27. PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENTS, SUPERINTENDENTS, PUBLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPALS, AND TEACHERS WHO AGREE THE FOLLOWING WOULD STRENGTHEN TEACHING AS A PROFESSION

	All School Board Presidents	Superintendents/a	Public Principals/a	Teachers/b	
				Public Teachers	Private Teachers
	%	%	%	%	%
Pay teachers based on job performance in addition to seniority and level of education	87	83	79	69	82
Let the market determine how much teachers get paid, i.e., pay people more in high demand areas such as math and science	49	42	27	22	26
Have upward mobility within the ranks of teaching i.e., career ladders	79	87	88	80	84
Introduce a proficiency exam for entry into teaching similar to the Bar Exam for lawyers or the CPA Exam for accountants	81	72	71	59	65
Give individual teachers more autonomy in determining what and how they teach	51	40	44	77	69
Give teachers greater participation in decision-making at the district level	56	63	79	NA	NA
Give teachers greater participation in decision-making at the school-building level	75	80	87	NA	NA

Source: /a The National Center for Education Information's survey of 1,704 superintendents, 1,349 public school principals, and 524 private school principals conducted between October 20 and December 20, 1987.

/b Survey of 1,592 teachers conducted by the National Center for Education Information, February 7-April 15, 1986

TABLE 28. WHAT WOULD STRENGTHEN TEACHING AS A PROFESSION, BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

QUESTION 22. PERCENT OF SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENTS WHO AGREE THE FOLLOWING WOULD MAKE TEACHING A MORE TRUE PROFESSION

	By Enrollment Size			By Metro Status of Community					By Highest Degree Held		
	10,000	2,500-9,999	Less than 2,500	Pop. 500,000+	Pop. 150,000-499,999	Other Urban	Suburban	Rural	J.D. M.D. Ph.D.	Master's & Other post baccalaureate	Bachelor's	Less than Bachelor's
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Pay teachers based on job performance in addition to seniority and level of education	88	88	87	99	83	87	88	87	86	88	86	88
Let the market determine how much teachers get paid i.e., pay people more in high demand areas such as math and science	54	55	47	60	53	41	52	49	62	49	49	46
Have upward mobility within the ranks of teaching i.e., career ladders	89	82	77	99	83	81	84	77	86	79	81	76
Introduce a proficiency exam for entry into teaching similar to the Bar Exam for lawyers or the CPA Exam for accountants	78	80	81	95	76	77	82	81	82	75	80	84
Give individual teachers more autonomy in determining what and how they teach	59	50	52	75	62	56	55	49	53	56	57	45
Give teachers greater participation in decision-making at the district level	72	66	52	75	76	69	63	50	54	65	59	50
Give teachers greater participation in decision-making at the school-building level	84	83	73	90	85	81	77	73	79	79	79	69

TABLE 29. PUBLIC'S ATTITUDES ABOUT PERFORMANCE-BASED PAY AND TESTING FOR TEACHERS

DO YOU FAVOR OR OPPOSE AN INCREASED PAY SCALE FOR THOSE TEACHERS WHO HAVE PROVED THEMSELVES PARTICULARLY CAPABLE?

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Nonpublic School Parents
	%	%	%	%
Favor	84	84	86	88
Oppose	11	11	11	8
Don't know	5	5	3	4

WOULD YOU FAVOR OR OPPOSE THE IDEA OF ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL SET OF STANDARDS FOR THE CERTIFICATION OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS?

Favor	86	85	89	85
Oppose	9	9	8	13
Don't know	5	6	3	2

IN YOUR OPINION, SHOULD EXPERIENCED TEACHERS BE PERIDOICALLY REQUIRED TO PASS A STATEWIDE BASIC COMPETENCY TEST IN THEIR SUBJECT AREA OR AREAS, OR NOT?

Yes	86	84	89	85
No	11	11	10	12
Don't know	3	5	1	2

DO YOU THINK THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS NEED TO ATTRACT MORE CAPABLE STUDENTS IN THE TEACHING PROFESSION, OR NOT?

Yes	89	89	90	88
No	7	7	8	9
Don't know	4	4	2	3

Source: The Gallup Organization surveyed 2,118 adults (18 years and older) April 8-10, 1988 for the Phil Delta Kappa/ Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools.

TABLE 30. ALTERNATE ROUTES FOR CERTIFYING TEACHERS

QUESTION 21. SOME STATES ARE NOW BRINGING ADULTS WHO ALREADY HAVE AT LEAST A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN A FIELD OTHER THAN EDUCATION BUT NO PREPARATION IN EDUCATION COURSES INTO TEACHING. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING MOST CLEARLY REPRESENTS YOUR OPINION ABOUT HIRING NON-TEACHER EDUCATION GRADUATES TO TEACH?

	All School Board Presidents	Superintendents/a	Public Principals/a	School Board Presidents By Enrollment Size		
				10,000+	2,500-9,999	Less than 2,500
	%	%	%	%	%	%
They should be hired	3	4	2	4	3	3
They should be given an opportunity to teach, and if they demonstrate they know the subject matter and can teach effectively, they should be hired	30	22	18	30	33	29
They should go through one year of academic coursework in educational subjects based at a college before being hired	7	5	5	5	5	7
They should go through a one-year, paid internship that combines college course-work and on-site training in a school before being hired	28	33	39	39	30	27
They should go through a one-year unpaid internship that combines college course-work and on-site training in a school before being hired	7	10	8	4	9	6
They should take a summer, 6-to-8 week work-shop designed to orient them to teaching before being hired	6	5	4	7	5	7
They should go back to college and complete a traditional teacher education program and get fully certified before they are hired as teachers	15	18	23	10	10	17
Other	3	2	1	2	3	3

Source: /a The National Center for Education Information's survey of 1,704 superintendents, 1,349 public school principals, and 524 private school principals conducted between October 20 and December 20, 1987.

TABLE 31. ALTERNATE ROUTES FOR CERTIFYING TEACHERS, BY HIGHEST DEGREE HELD AND BY NUMBER OF YEARS ON SCHOOL BOARD

QUESTION 21. SOME STATES ARE NOW BRINGING ADULTS WHO ALREADY HAVE AT LEAST A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN A FIELD OTHER THAN EDUCATION BUT NO PREPARATION IN EDUCATION COURSES INTO TEACHING. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING MOST CLEARLY REPRESENTS YOUR OPINION ABOUT HIRING NON-TEACHER EDUCATION GRADUATES TO TEACH?

	By Highest Degree Held				By Number of Years on School Board			
	J.D. M.D. Ph.D.	Master's & Other post bacca-laureate	Bachelor's	Less than Bachelor's	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-9 years	10+ years
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
They should be hired	7	2	3	3	2	3	7	1
They should be given an opportunity to teach, and if they demonstrate they know the subject matter and can teach effectively, they should be hired	32	37	36	22	34	28	28	30
They should go through one year of academic coursework in educational subjects based at a college before being hired	3	6	4	9	6	7	4	8
They should go through a one-year, paid internship that combines college course-work and on-site training in a school before being hired	40	26	27	27	26	33	29	26
They should go through a one-year, unpaid internship that combines college course-work and on-site training in a school before being hired	3	5	8	8	5	10	5	5
They should take a summer, 6-8 week work-shop designed to orient them to teaching before being hired	4	6	8	6	6	4	7	9
They should go back to college and complete a traditional teacher education program and get fully certified before they are hired as teachers	10	12	10	22	17	12	16	18
Other	1	5	3	2	4	3	4	2

Chapter 7: Attitudes About Sex Education and Busing

BUSING OF SCHOOL CHILDREN TO ACHIEVE RACIAL BALANCE?

Busing of school children, to achieve racial balance, is favored by a very small proportion of school board presidents and superintendents. Only 13 percent of school board presidents and 16 percent of superintendents favor the idea.

When Louis Harris and Associates asked 1,280 adults, between November 26 and December 2, 1986, "Do you favor or oppose busing of school children to achieve racial balance?", 41 percent said "Favor" and 53 percent said "Oppose." Six percent were not sure. When Harris asked the same question a decade earlier, March 1, 1976, the responses were: "Favor," 14 percent; "Oppose," 78 percent; and "Not sure," 8 percent.

When NCEI asked that same question in its survey of school administrators, in fall 1987, only 16 percent of superintendents, 20 percent of public school principals, and 18 percent of private school principals, said they favored busing of school children, to achieve racial balance.

School board presidents, as well as superintendents and principals, in large districts, favor busing -- more than those from small districts. For example, 25 percent of school board presidents, and 31 percent of superintendents, in districts that enroll 10,000 or more students, favor busing. This compares with 10 percent of school board presidents, and 14 percent of superintendents, in districts that enroll 2,500 or fewer students.

By type of community, both school board presidents and superintendents in inner cities favor busing -- more than those in smaller urban areas, who, in turn, favor busing more do than school officials in suburban districts. School board presidents in rural districts are the most opposed to busing of school children, to

achieve racial balance.

SEX EDUCATION IN GRADES 4 THROUGH 8?

The public, and parents who send their children to public schools, and the officials who run those schools, are also on opposite sides of the sex education issues.

While a little more than half (55 percent) of the general public, 60 percent of public school parents, and 69 percent of private school parents, feel the public elementary schools in their communities should teach sex education in grades 4 through 8, 80 percent of school board presidents, 86 percent of superintendents, and 84 percent of principals in public schools, feel this should be done.

SEX EDUCATION IN HIGH SCHOOLS?

There is more agreement between school officials and the public, on teaching sex education in high schools. Seventy-six percent of the general public, 82 percent of public school parents, 81 percent of non-public school parents, and 73 percent of those polled by Gallup, who had no children in school, said public high schools should include sex education in their instructional programs. Ninety-three percent of school board presidents, 92 percent of superintendents, and 92 percent of principals, agreed.

All school board presidents from large, inner cities, who responded to the NCEI survey, said sex education should be taught in grades 4 through 8 and in high school. This compares with 77 percent of school board presidents in rural areas, who favor teaching sex education in the elementary grades, and 92 percent who favor it at the high school level.

TABLE 32. COMPARISONS BETWEEN ATTITUDES OF SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENTS, SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, AND THE PUBLIC ABOUT SEX EDUCATION AND BUSING.

QUESTION 24. DO YOU FEEL PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT INCLUDE SEX EDUCATION IN THEIR INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM?

	All School Board Presidents	Superintendents/a	Public Principals/a	National Totals	General Public/b: Public School Parents	General Public/b: Nonpublic School Parents	General Public/b: No Children in School
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Should	93	92	92	76/b	82	81	73
Should not	5	5	5	16	14	18	16
Don't know	2	3	3	8	4	1	

QUESTION 25. DO YOU FEEL THE PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN THIS COMMUNITY SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT TEACH SEX EDUCATION IN GRADES 4 THROUGH 8?

Should	80	86	84	55/b	60	69	52
Should not	13	10	10	37	35	29	38
Don't know	7	4	6	8	5	2	10

QUESTION 26. DO YOU FAVOR OR OPPOSE BUSING OF SCHOOL CHILDREN TO ACHIEVE RACIAL BALANCE?

Favor	13	16	20	41/c
Oppose	69	66	61	53
Not sure	17	18	18	6

Source: /a The National Center for Education Information's survey of 1,704 superintendents, 1,349 public school principals, and 524 private school principals conducted between October 20 and December 20, 1987.

/b The Gallup Organization surveyed 1,571 adults (18 years of age and older) April 10-13, 1987 for the Phi Delta Kappa/ Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools

/c Survey of 1,250 adults conducted by Louis Harris and Associates, November 26-December 2, 1986.

TABLE 33. SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENTS' ATTITUDES ABOUT SEX EDUCATION AND BUSING, BY DISTRICT ENROLLMENT SIZE AND BY METROPOLITAN STATUS OF THE COMMUNITY.

QUESTION 24. DO YOU FEEL PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT INCLUDE SEX EDUCATION IN THEIR INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM?

	All School Board Presidents	By Enrollment Size			By Metro Status of Community				
		10,000+	2,500-9,999	Less than 2,500	Pop. 500,000+	Pop. 150,000-499,999	Other Urban	Suburban	Rural
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Should	93	96	95	93	100	96	97	95	92
Should not	5	4	4	6	*	4	3	3	7
Don't know	2	*	1	1	*	0	*	2	1

QUESTION 25. DO YOU FEEL THE PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN THIS COMMUNITY SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT TEACH SEX EDUCATION IN GRADES 4 THROUGH 8?

Should	80	87	88	78	100	93	88	84	77
Should not	13	10	8	14	*	5	6	6	17
Don't know	7	3	4	8	*	2	5	10	6

QUESTION 26. DO YOU FAVOR OR OPPOSE BUSING OF SCHOOL CHILDREN TO ACHIEVE RACIAL BALANCE?

Favor	13	25	21	10	40	48	22	14	11
Oppose	69	65	67	71	45	46	64	71	70
Not sure	17	10	12	19	15	6	14	15	19

** Less than 0.5 percent*

Chapter 8: Problems and Main Purposes of Education

BIGGEST PROBLEMS

"Use of drugs" and "lack of discipline" top the public's list of problems with which the public schools in their communities must deal. "Lack of proper financial support" is the biggest problem cited by school officials.

When asked, "What do you think are the biggest problems with which the public schools in this community must deal?", 32 percent of the general public and 30 percent of parents of public school students polled by the Gallup Organization in spring 1988 responded, "Use of drugs," and 19 percent of the public and 15 percent of public school parents said, "Lack of discipline."

Ten percent of the school board presidents surveyed by NCEI this winter cited use of drugs as a major problem and four percent said lack of discipline.

A fourth (25 percent) of the superintendents surveyed by NCEI in late 1987 said use of drugs was a major problem, and 13 percent cited lack of discipline.

The overriding problem cited by both the school board presidents and by school administrators was "Lack of proper financial support." Sixty-one percent of board presidents and 74 percent of superintendents said not enough money was the iggest problem with which the public schools in their communities must deal. This compares with only 12 percent of the general public and 17 percent of public school parents who cited money was a problem.

There were no significant differences in the problems cited by school board presidents, by size of school district.

Presidents of school boards in inner cities and in the suburbs listed drugs as a problem more frequently than did their smaller urban and rural counterparts. Also, presidents in suburban areas cited lack of enough money

less frequently than presidents in other types of communities.

MAIN PURPOSES OF EDUCATION

The main purposes of education identified by all types of school officials across all types of school districts were "To teach students basic skills and knowledge," followed by "To teach students reasoning and analytical skills."

Eighty percent of school board presidents, 85 percent of superintendents, and 84 percent of public school principals, checked teaching students basic skills and knowledge when asked, "In your opinion, what are the main purposes of education today?"

Sixty-one percent of the presidents of school boards, 64 percent of superintendents, and 62 percent of public school principals, checked "To teach students reasoning and analytical skills."

The third choice of all groups was "To help students become good citizens" -- 42 percent of presidents, compared with 63 percent of both superintendents and principals, selected this option.

School board presidents rated preparing students for jobs and for college more highly than did superintendents. Thirty-eight percent of presidents, compared with 29 percent of superintendents, said preparing students for jobs was a main purpose of education. Thirty-six percent of the presidents, compared with 24 percent of superintendents, cited preparing students for college as a main purpose of education.

TABLE 34. BIGGEST PROBLEMS WITH WHICH SCHOOLS MUST DEAL AS IDENTIFIED BY SUPERINTENDENTS, PUBLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPALS, THE GENERAL PUBLIC, AND PARENTS OF PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

QUESTION 18. WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE BIGGEST PROBLEMS WITH WHICH THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THIS COMMUNITY MUST DEAL?

	All School Board Presidents	Superintendents/a	Public Principals/a	National Totals/b	Public School Parents/b
	%	%	%	%	%
Use of drugs	10	25	25	32	30
Lack of discipline	4	13	24	19	15
Lack of proper financial support	61	74	64	12	17
Difficulty in getting good teachers	7	23	22	11	11
Poor curriculum/poor standards	7	6	6	11	11
Large schools/overcrowding	7	8	18	6	10
Moral standards	5	19	22	6	7
Parents' lack of interest	13	56	58	7	7
Pupils' lack of interest/truancy	5	10	34	5	4
Drinking/alcoholism	3	30	13	5	6
Teachers' lack of interest	4	13	20	3	3
Low teacher pay	2	40	8	4	7

Source: /a The National Center for Education Information's survey of 1,704 superintendents, 1,349 public school principals, and 524 private school principals conducted between October 20 and December 20, 1987.

/b The Gallup Organization surveyed 2,118 adults (18 years of age and older) April 8-10, 1988 for the Phi Delta Kappa/ Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools.

TABLE 35. BIGGEST PROBLEMS WITH WHICH SCHOOLS MUST DEAL AS IDENTIFIED BY SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENTS, BY DISTRICT ENROLLMENT SIZE AND BY METROPOLITAN STATUS OF THE COMMUNITY

QUESTION 18. WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE BIGGEST PROBLEMS WITH WHICH THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN YOUR COMMUNITY MUST DEAL?

	By Enrollment Size			By Metro Status of Community				
	10,000+	2,500-9,999	Less than 2,500	Pop. 500,000+	Pop. 150,000-499,999	Other Urban	Suburban	Rural
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Use of drugs	10	12	10	10	21	8	16	8
Lack of discipline	4	8	4	25	10	7	4	4
Lack of proper financial support	63	60	62	35	62	63	54	63
Difficulty in getting good teachers	7	7	7	0	11	6	5	7
Poor curriculum/poor standards	7	9	7	0	4	6	6	8
Large schools/overcrowding	16	13	5	10	8	11	9	6
Moral standards	4	4	5	15	2	2	8	4
Parents' lack of interest	13	16	12	30	15	10	18	11
Pupils' lack of interest/ truancy	6	5	5	5	2	5	6	4
Drinking/alcoholism	2	3	3	0	4	2	5	2
Teachers' lack of interest	3	3	5	0	2	1	7	4
Low teacher pay	3	3	2	5	2	4	1	2

TABLE 36. MAIN PURPOSES OF EDUCATION

QUESTION 33. IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT ARE THE MAIN PURPOSES OF EDUCATION TODAY?

	All School Board Presidents	Superintendents/a	Public Principals/a	School Board Presidents By Enrollment Size: 10,000+	2,500-9,999	Less than 2,500	By Metro Status of Community: Pop. 500,000+	Pop. 150,000-499,999	Other Urban	Suburban	Rural
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
To prepare students for jobs	38	29	35	39	37	38	25	42	42	29	40
To prepare students for college	36	24	21	35	37	36	25	45	35	34	37
To teach students reasoning and analytical skills	61	64	62	65	67	59	60	71	57	69	59
To help students develop sound character	19	26	26	20	17	20	30	33	18	18	20
To teach students basic skills and knowledge	80	85	84	80	79	80	95	82	77	79	80
To instill sound morals and ethical principles in America's youth	21	22	17	18	20	22	35	13	26	16	22
To help students become good citizens	42	63	63	41	47	41	30	32	43	43	43
Other	5	4	3	4	7	5	0	2	9	6	4

Source: /a The National Center for Education Information's survey of 1,704 superintendents, 1,349 public school principals, and 524 private school principals conducted between October 20 and December 20, 1987.

Appendix A: Methodology

The **Profile of School Board Presidents in the U.S.** survey was conducted by the National Center for Education Information from November 15, 1988 to February 10, 1989. A total of 1,217 school board presidents completed and mailed back questionnaires. The respondents represented public school board presidents of all districts enrolling students in grades kindergarten through grade 12 throughout the fifty states and the District of Columbia.

SAMPLE SELECTION OF SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENTS

The school board presidents included in the study were selected through a systematic random sampling procedure from a list, by name, of 14,840 district board presidents compiled by Market Data Retrieval of Shelton, Connecticut.

INTERVIEWING METHOD

Each school board president selected for the sample was mailed a questionnaire November 15, 1988 at his or her school district office. Included was a letter from NCEI explaining the significance of the study and urging the board president to return the questionnaire as soon as possible. Any president who had not returned a completed questionnaire by January 3, 1989 was mailed a second questionnaire.

QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT

Many individuals, in addition to the Advisory Committee, contributed their suggestions and comments to the survey questionnaire, and NCEI is extremely grateful for their contributions. However, final responsibility for the survey instrument rests with NCEI.

DATA PROCESSING

Dr. Fred Quelle managed the data processing segment of the study. He supervised editing, coding, key punching and verification of the data from all questionnaires returned to NCEI. Dr. Quelle developed a computer program that tabulated the data, checked for consistency in the responses and processed the data. The final output was a series of computer tables reflecting the results of each question and across questions by significant groupings.

WEIGHTING THE DATA

School board presidents who represented districts having 10,000 or more students were oversampled to achieve 412 interviews. This allowed independent analysis of this crucial segment which represents 45 percent of total school enrollment in the country. For purposes of analyzing all school board presidents through the country combined, each of the three enrollment segments (fewer than 2,500, 2,500-9,999, and 10,000 plus) have been weighted to their proper proportion of all United States school board presidents.

RESPONSE RATES AND SAMPLE DISPOSITION

The following table reflects the sample disposition for the study. A total of 1,217 completed questionnaires were returned to NCEI.

	TOTAL
A. Questionnaires completed and processed	1,217
B. Total number of questionnaires mailed	2,197
Thus, using the formula A/B, our response rate is	55%

RELIABILITY OF SURVEY PERCENTAGES

Any sample survey is subject to sample variation. The degree of variation is determined by the level of the percentages expressed in the results and by the number of interviews completed relating to a response.

The following table reflects the amount of possible sample variation that can be applied to percentage results of this study. Simply stated, the table indicates that chances are 95 out of 100 that a result from the study will not vary, plus or minus, by more than the indicated number of percentage points, from the results that would have been achieved if questionnaires had been completed by all people in the universe that is represented by the sample.

If the response rate for a sample size of 500, for example, was 80%, then 95 times out of 100 the response from the entire population would be between 76%

and 84%. It is important to note that survey results based on small-sized subgroups are subject to large sampling error.

APPROXIMATE SAMPLE TOLERANCES (AT 95% CONFIDENCE) TO USE IN EVALUATING PERCENTAGE RESULTS APPEARING IN THIS REPORT

NUMBER OF PEOPLE ASKED QUESTION ON WHICH SURVEY RESULT IS BASED	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 10% OR 90%	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 20% OR 80%	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 30% OR 70%	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 40% OR 60%	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 50%
2,000	1	2	2	2	2
1,500	2	2	2	3	3
1,000	2	2	3	3	3
900	2	3	3	3	3
800	2	3	3	3	3
700	2	3	3	4	4
600	2	3	4	4	4
500	3	4	4	4	4
400	3	4	4	5	5
300	3	5	5	6	6
200	4	6	6	7	7
100	6	8	9	10	10
50	8	11	13	14	14

When comparing results from different parts of a sample, sample tolerances are also used to determine if the difference between two subgroups can be considered statistically significant.

The figures in the following table reflect (at the 95% confidence level) the percentage difference that must be achieved in order for the difference between two subgroups to be considered statistically significant.

For example, if 43% of one group of 800 responded "no" to a particular question and 37% of an independent group of 500 responded "no" to the same question, then the observed difference (6 percentage points) is significant since it is greater than the potential sampling error (5 percentage points) reflected in the table. These errors account for sampling error only. Survey research is susceptible to nonsampling errors as well, such as respondent recording and data processing. However, the procedures followed by NCEI in this study should minimize these kinds of errors.

APPROXIMATE SAMPLING TOLERANCES (AT 95% CONFIDENCE) TO USE IN EVALUATING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TWO PERCENTAGE RESULTS APPEARING IN THIS REPORT

APPROXIMATE SAMPLE SIZE OF TWO GROUPS ASKED QUESTION ON WHICH SURVEY RESULT IS BASED	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 10% OR 90%	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 20% OR 80%	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 30% OR 70%	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 40% OR 60%	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 50%
2,000 vs. 2,000	2	2	3	3	3
1,000	2	3	4	4	4
800	3	3	4	4	4
500	3	4	4	5	5
300	4	5	6	6	6
200	4	6	7	7	7
100	6	8	9	10	10
50	9	11	13	14	14
1,000 vs. 1,000	3	4	4	4	4
800	3	4	4	5	5
500	3	4	5	5	5
300	4	5	6	6	6
200	5	6	7	7	8
100	6	8	9	10	10
50	9	11	13	14	14
800 vs. 800	3	4	4	5	5
500	3	4	5	5	6
300	4	5	6	7	7
200	5	6	7	8	8
100	6	8	10	10	10
50	9	11	13	14	14
500 vs. 500	4	4	6	6	6
300	4	6	7	7	7
200	5	7	8	8	8
100	7	9	10	11	11
50	9	12	13	14	15
300 vs. 300	5	6	7	8	8
200	5	7	8	9	9
100	7	9	10	11	11
50	9	12	14	15	15
200 vs. 200	6	8	9	10	10
100	7	10	11	12	12
50	9	12	14	15	15

Appendix B: The American School Board Journal 1987 Survey of School Board Members

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Our 10th annual survey

Politics and power: How you're selected and elected to lead this nation's schools

Every year for the past decade, The American School Board JOURNAL *and Virginia Tech have surveyed a representative sample of the men and women who serve on U.S. school boards. In this, the tenth annual board member survey, we once again take a comprehensive look at who you are and what problems you face in your school system. You'll find the results on the following pages.*

Our three-part survey was sent to a random selection of 4,493 school board members in February 1987. The 1,557 (34.7 percent) who responded represent a cross section of board members in all 50 states, giving our results what statisticians call a 95 percent confidence level and a maximum possible error rate of plus or minus 2 percent.

This year's survey focuses on the recruitment and selection of school board members and the representative nature of board service. What motivates people to serve on school boards? What kinds of previous school and community service prepare people for board membership? Do prospective board members mount organized election campaigns? Once on the board, do they see themselves as trustees or as delegates? You'll find the answers to these questions and many more in the article beginning on this page.

A more personal portrait of the "typical" school board member—your age, sex, ethnic background, education, occupation, and income—begins on page 20. Look there, too, for details about your school system, community, and board.

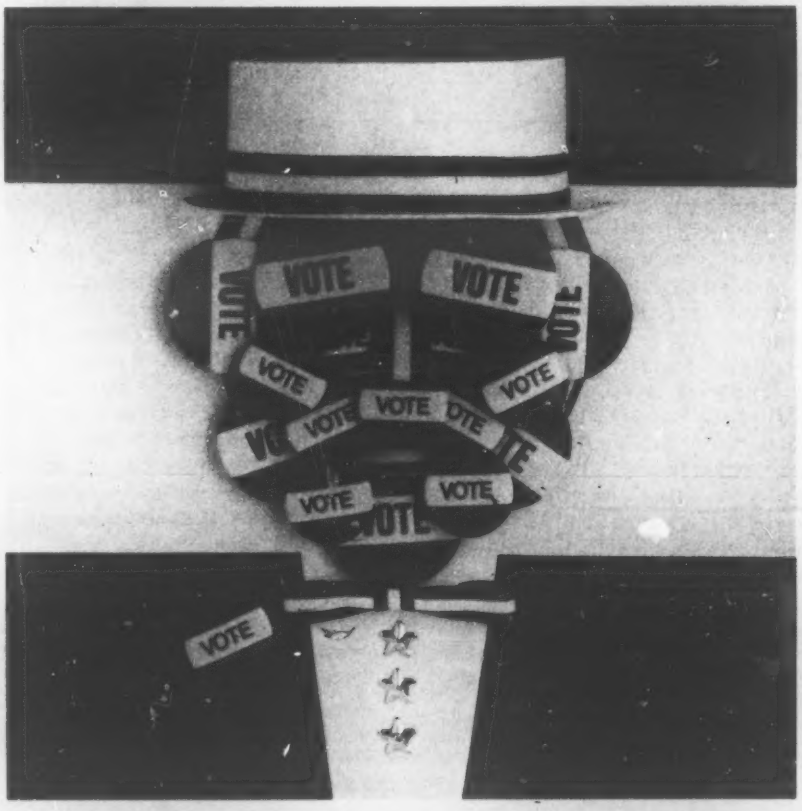
This year, as in past years, we also asked you to tell us the major worries you and your school system face right now. In the article beginning on page 21, we detail your concerns and those of the general public, as reported in the 1987 Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools. Finally, for a region-by-region look at board concerns and demographics, see the charts on pages 24 and 25.

By Beatrice H. Cameron, Kenneth E. Underwood, and Jim C. Fortune

POLITICS AND POWER are critical in the governance of public schools. If politics determine values and the allocation of resources, then the distribution and exercise of power determine who gets what, when, and how. And like other members of governing bodies, school board members constitute only a fraction of the total population—in other words, very few govern very many. Selecting those few is a political process, and it is that process on which we focus in this tenth annual JOURNAL-Virginia Tech survey of board members.

Lay governance of the public schools has had a profound impact on our society; indeed, it has played an essential role in establishing universal free public education in the U.S. But despite 200 years of evolution, the local school board has changed little in the past 75 years, and in recent years boards have been criticized for abdicating leadership, resisting change, and being increasingly motivated

Beatrice H. Cameron is an assistant superintendent in the Fairfax County (Virginia) schools. Kenneth E. Underwood, currently on leave, is a professor of education at Virginia Tech's Northern Virginia Graduate Center, Falls Church, Va. Jim C. Fortune is a professor of education at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.



OPINIONS EXPRESSED BY THE JOURNAL OR ANY OF ITS AUTHORS DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT POSITIONS OF THE NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

by the narrow concerns of special-interest groups.

How strong is the grass-roots leadership of our public schools? How responsive are school board members to the communities they serve? How closely is board membership tied to partisan politics?

In light of the current emphasis on school reform, it is important to understand the process by which local school board members are empowered to act on behalf of their constituents to shape public school policy. Understanding the underlying basis of lay control of education today can help us predict—even help shape—the future of education governance.

"There is no greater honor than to be entrusted with decisions affecting our children"

An Illinois board member

Community apprenticeship

Civic-minded, responsible, experienced—these adjectives describe today's school board member, for whom board service is one more chapter in a story of active involvement in the educational, civic, and political life of the community. Before joining the board, in fact, the vast majority of you—94.9 percent—served your communities in at least one other capacity, and two-thirds of you were involved in three or more community organizations or activities, for an overall average of 3.4 prior service activities per school board member.

Involvement in school activities is your most common form of community service: Some 84.4 percent of you already had contributed time and energy in one or more school-related capacity before joining the board. Most common—indeed, the only area of prior service reported by a majority of respondents—is membership in a parent-teacher organization, a service 52.2 percent of you share. Another 36.9 percent of you were school volunteers before joining the board, and 35.2 percent served on citizen advisory committees.

If prior service to the schools demonstrates your long-standing interest in education, your involvement in civic and business affairs shows your commitment to the community's well-being. Two-thirds of you (65.7 percent) report you took part in one or more civic or business organization—most commonly, a service club or civic organization such as the Lions or Rotary (43.7 percent). Another 38.8 percent were involved in a charitable organization, such as the United Way or Red Cross, before joining the board, and 19 percent of you were active in the local chamber of commerce.

Less common is involvement in politics and government: Only 43.3 percent of you report prior service in this area, and that service most commonly was as a member of the Republican (14.7 percent) or Democratic (14.4 percent) party organization.

Why you serve

Special-interest groups? Forget 'em. Except for a mere 7 percent of you, representing a specific group wasn't why you sought school board membership. But you did have a good reason—or rather good *reasons*—for joining the board. Your top five motives for board service:

1. To exercise your civic duty (66 percent).
2. To increase academic standards (53.4 percent).
3. To improve your own child's education (40.3 percent).
4. To make local schools more accountable (39.7 percent).
5. To make the schools more fiscally sound (31.7 percent).

In addition, a full quarter of you (25.2 percent) decided to try for a school board seat to revise curriculum—a concern that is of growing importance to board members (see the article on page 21).

In addition to your own motivation, nine out of ten of you (92.4 percent) were encouraged by others to seek school board membership. Most often, the single most important source of that encouragement was friends and neighbors (30.4 percent), current school board members (23.9 percent), or members of your family (19.7 percent). Add family encouragement to that of friends and neighbors, and a solid half of you (50.1 percent) report personal, informal sources of encouragement.

Only a few board members are urged to seek board membership by professional school personnel (6 percent), citizen groups (5.8 percent), or government and political figures (3 percent). And even fewer—just 1.3 percent—report encouragement from a teacher union or organization. Nevertheless, some respondents commented on the increasing politicization of school board campaigns. "Our board has been a target/platform for politically connected members," one board member wrote, and another reported that "local politicians are attempting to gain control of the board." An Arizona board member commented, "I am very concerned at an increasing involvement by the teacher unions in school administrative issues in general and board member elections specifically."

The board you sought to join has a mean size of 6.7 members, although the number of members reported by respondents ranges from 3 to 22. Two-thirds of you say your boards serve school districts whose boundaries do not coincide with the boundaries of any other governmental unit, such as a city or county. And a large majority say your school systems are fiscally independent—that is, budget control and taxing authority rest with your board, not with local government. Finally, 72.1 percent of you represent your school district at large; 23.6 percent represent specific areas within the school district.

Getting on board

Ninety-five out of 100 school boards select members by election, rather than appointment, and more than two-thirds of those members (68.7 percent) are nominated for board service through a sign-up process supported by a petition. Another 22.7 percent join the race by other means, most commonly simply by filing their names, registering, or applying. Despite the politicization concern some respondents noted, only 4.2 percent of you ran for the board as the nominee of a specific political party.

"It's no day at the beach being on the school board"

A Pennsylvania board member

In keeping with that finding, the large majority of you (79.8 percent) were nonpartisan candidates for the board. Only 7.9 percent of you ran as members of a political party, and another 6.9 percent were members of a slate of candidates.

Other significant findings about how you became board members:

• *Selection format.* Respondents' most recent elections or appointments to the board fell into one of two formats: In the majority of cases (56.1 percent), voters or appointing officials were presented with a field of candidates and instructed to

select one. The average number of candidates competing for the same seat was 2.2.

In the other format (41.6 percent), voters or appointing officials filled a certain number of seats by selecting a like number of people out of a field of candidates. On the average, 2.9 seats were available, with an average of 5.9 candidates competing for each seat.

Only 24.7 percent of you—regardless of how you were selected—were unopposed in your quest for a seat on the board. Still, a number of you commented on the difficulty of getting well-qualified people to run for the school board.

Finally, slightly less than a third of you (32.6 percent) unseated an incumbent when you first were elected or appointed to the board.

• *Elections and recalls.* Board elections are held during all times of the year, but the most common months are November (30 percent), April (20.2 percent), and May (16.6 percent). At a majority of those elections (58.1 percent), other issues are on the ballot along with the choice of school board members. Among those issues: local elections (68.9 percent), state elections (41.1 percent), the school budget (18.9 percent), and national elections (18.8 percent).

You report that typically only 1,000 people vote in these elections, which represents approximately 25 percent of the community's registered voters. (A California board member told us that, once board elections were combined with the general election in November, voter turnout tripled.)

A majority of you (56.9 percent) say recall elections are permitted in your jurisdiction, but 79.8 percent of the board members in areas where recall is allowed say it never has been used. Only 2.7 percent of you have been the target of a recall yourself, but 7 percent say other current members of your school board have been.

• *Campaigning.* Slightly less than half of you (47 percent) ran a formal, public campaign for school board office, and a like number of you had a campaign issue or platform. Six out of ten elected board members who ran organized campaigns raised campaign funds; the typical war chest was $500, as was the typical amount spent on the campaign. These elected board members used a variety of strategies to get their names before the voters, including, in order of popularity, newspaper advertisements, meet-the-candidate sessions, campaign literature, posters, telephone campaigning, and door-to-door campaigning.

Six out of ten of you who faced opposition for your current board seat (59.4 percent) say your ideas about schools were different from those of other candidates—most commonly about the role of the school board (63.2 percent) or about educational programs (46.9 percent). But the 48.9 percent of you whose campaign centered on specific issues more likely pushed for improving educational programs (55 percent) than for strengthening the role of the board (22 percent).

At the time of your most recent election or appointment, the majority of you (68.9 percent) were not publicly supported by any organized group. But of those who were, the most active support came from parent-teacher groups (25.9 percent), unions or employe organizations (23.4 percent), and civic and business groups (15.8 percent).

"The role of a school board member is unknown to the general public. But the rewards are real"

A Washington State board member

• *What's next?* Chances are, you'd like to serve another term on the board—at least, that's what 44.3 percent of you say. And many of you added comments like these: "The work I started isn't complete," "I still have more to give," and "I fear I've lost my marbles, but I'm running again."

Another 33.5 percent of you say Maybe to another board term. A typical comment from this group is, "Some days I'm sure I will; other days, I'm sure I won't."

The 19.6 percent who've decided not to seek another term give such reasons as these: "It's time for someone else to try it" and "I've served my time."

And most of you (64.9 percent) don't plan to run for any other public office. A quarter of you (24.6 percent) say you might, but only 8.2 percent definitely plan to throw your hats in the ring. One board member who won't be joining the political fray has this to say: "At one time, I thought I would use service on the board as a stepping stone to a seat on the city council, but I now think that visibility achieved by eight years on the board will offer other avenues to serve my community that could be more satisfying—and less all-consuming of my time and energy."

The politics of board service

A number of these findings reinforce the notion that board membership remains largely separated from partisan politics—despite rumblings of alarm to the contrary. Consider:

• The majority of you sought a seat on the board as a nonpartisan candidate.

• The great majority of you did not seek board membership as single-issue candidates.

• The majority of you were encouraged in your quest for a board seat by friends and family, rather than by organized political groups.

• The majority of you are elected or appointed to serve your school system at large, rather than to represent a specific geographical area.

Further, your comments on the survey reflect your belief that education is better served by its removal from the partisan political arena, as typified by this board member's remark: "I believe the politics in school districts has put education in a secondary position."

The way you choose to represent your constituents reflects your desire to be accountable not only to a specific segment of the public, but to the entire community. Board members often are viewed either as delegates—doing what the public wants them to do even if it is not their own personal preference—or as trustees—using their own judgment regardless of what others want them to do. Of these two modes of representation, you clearly see yourselves more as trustees (68.3 percent) than as delegates (25.4 percent; the remaining 6.3 percent either checked both or gave no response).

The current education reform movement has brought with it entreaties to school boards to strengthen their leadership by improving their communities' understanding of their role and by increasing their own effectiveness. And it is difficult to do either without an understanding of the school board's place in the political arena. Some might argue that the effort to keep politics and education separate has succeeded all too well, that an apolitical approach to education results in a board selection process that does not measure up to democratic standards. Our findings suggest that board member recruitment and selection remain removed from partisan politics, but they nevertheless reflect the political process and the shifts and changes in the American public. Education, it could be argued, is no less political for all that—it is merely subject to a different set of political forces. □

It's ten years later, and you've hardly changed at all

ONE APPARENTLY immutable fact is that U.S. school board members in general are more affluent and better educated than the general public. It was true in 1978, according to the first annual JOURNAL-Virginia Tech board member survey. And it's true again this year. Consider these comparisons:

• Virtually half (49.1 percent) of the board members responding to this year's survey report family incomes of $50,000 or more, although the largest concentration—18.1 percent—is in the $40,000-$49,000 income bracket. Any way you count it, that's a good deal more than the median family income in the U.S., which was $29,458 in 1986, according to the Census Bureau's Current Population Reports.

• Almost a third of you (32.8 percent) hold four-year college degrees, and a like number have been to graduate school. That means you've spent a lot more time in the classroom than the average U.S. citizen has: According to the Census Bureau, approximately 19 percent of people age 25 and over had completed four years of college or more by 1985, the latest year for which data are available.

As your education and income might suggest, almost half of you hold professional (32.5 percent) or managerial (15.4 percent) jobs. Another 13.9 percent of you own your own businesses; 11.9 percent are married women who do not work outside the home; and 8 percent are retired.

Nine out of ten of you currently are married, and although 36.9 percent of you have no children in public school right now, 50.8 percent of you are the parents of one or two schoolchildren. Virtually all of you—97.4 percent—own your own homes, and a like number of you have lived in your school district for six years or more.

Women and minorities

A decade's worth of board member surveys has documented an increase in the number of women serving on school boards—from 25.9 percent in 1978 to today's 39 percent. This year, for the first time, women actually outnumber men on school boards in one region—the Pacific states. There, 53.4 percent of board members are women, up from 48.8 percent last year. (See the regional charts on pages 24-25.)

But as women have consolidated their position at the board table, blacks, Hispanics, and other minorities have remained underrepresented. Since 1980, when our survey first reported board member ethnicity, the percentage of blacks on school boards has hovered between 2 percent and 4 percent, standing at 3.6 percent now. Similarly, Hispanics —1.5 percent of board members in this year's survey—consistently have made up only approximately 1 percent or 2 percent of board members nationwide.

Vital statistics

Here's a quick look at the "typical" U.S. school board member, circa 1987:

Sex	male
Age	41 to 50 years
Race	white
Marital status	married
Children in school	one or two
Education	college graduate
Occupation	professional or managerial
Family income	$40,000 to $49,999
Home ownership	owns his own home
Type of community	small town or suburb
School system enrollment	1,000 to 4,999 and growing
Years on school board	six
Length of term	four years
Number of board members	seven
Method of selection	election
Reason for serving	civic duty

Some differences show up from region to region, though. The southern states, as they have in past years, lead the U.S. in the percentage of board members who are members of minority groups—11.2 percent are black, and 3.0 percent are Hispanic. In contrast, only 0.5 percent of board members in the Western Region are black, the lowest percentage in the U.S. (The lowest percentage of Hispanic school board members—0.2 percent—is in the Central Region.)

One reason for this underrepresentation is the prevalence of at-large elections: When the entire electorate votes for every member, there is less chance minority candidates will win a seat than if voters from specific areas within the district choose their own board members. Our survey found more minorities among appointed board members than among those who were elected. In general, though, school boards do not mirror their constituencies when it comes to race.

Board service

The "typical" school board member (see the box on this page) was elected (92.4 percent), rather than appointed (7.6 percent) to the board (mean size: 6.7 members). Your term of office, typically, is three (35.6 percent) or four (50.8 percent) years. One-third of you are in your first term on the board, but another 26.5 percent have served two terms. (Few of you—just 5.3 percent—have served on another school board, though.) Your mean length of board service is 5.9 years—but one dedicated and hardy individual in our sample reports he has served an astonishing 42 years on his local board.

The community your school district serves is likely to be a small town (28.6 percent), suburb (27.6 percent), or rural area (25.9 percent). Only 11 percent of you are in urban communities (the remaining 6 percent do not specify). And reflecting that, fully half of you (50.7 percent) serve in school systems that enroll between 1,000 and 4,999 students. Another 19 percent are in smaller school systems with enrollments of less than 1,000. The breakdown for the remainder of the respondents: 16.1 percent, enrollment of 5,000-9,999; 8.7 percent, enrollment of 10,000-24,999; and 5.1 percent, enrollment of 25,000 or more.

But if your school system is relatively small, it might not stay that way: Right now, 38.6 percent of you say your school enrollment is increasing—and 54.5 percent expect enrollment increases in the next five years.—B.H.C., K.E.U., and J.C.F.

Appendix C: Educational Data From NCEI Survey of School Board Presidents

TABLE 37. HIGHEST DEGREE HELD, BY SELECTED CATEGORIES

	J.D.	M.D.	Ph.D	Master's	Other Post-bacca-laureate	Bachelor's	1,2,3 years College	Completed 12 yrs.	Less Than 12 yrs.
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
ALL	4	2	4	16	4	29	24	16	1
BY SIZE OF DISTRICT									
10,000+	8	1	8	24	5	32	15	6	.2
2,500-4,888	6	2	6	16	4	34	23	9	.2
<2,500	3	2	3	15	4	28	25	19	.9
BY TYPE OF COMMUNITY									
500,000+	15	0	5	20	5	30	5	20	0
150,000-499,999	14	7	5	23	0	25	22	2	0
Other urban	8	2	7	20	2	33	19	6	2
Suburban	4	2	8	19	2	32	22	10	1
Rural	3	1	2	14	5	28	25	21	*
BY INCOME LEVEL									
Low	2	2	2	17	3	26	24	20	1.6
Medium	5	1	4	15	4	30	25	14	*
High	3	6	5	25	2	38	8	13	0
BY AGE GROUP									
30-39	8	2	0	12	4	25	32	15	0
40-49	4	1	2	20	4	32	19	15	0
50-59	1	1	7	11	5	28	27	19	1
60+	3	4	11	20	*	29	19	11	3
BY SEX									
Male	5	2	5	16	4	27	21	18	1
Female	2	0	1	17	3	35	31	11	*
BY YEARS ON SCHOOL BOARD									
1, 2, 3 years	7	2	4	18	2	31	24	11	1
4, 5, 6 years	3	1	2	16	3	36	24	14	0
7, 8, 9 years	4	2	6	20	8	23	22	15	1
10+ years	3	1	6	12	2	26	26	23	0
POLITICAL ORIENTATION									
Liberal	8	0	5	22	2	42	14	6	1
Moderate	5	2	3	18	3	28	25	14	*
Conservative	2	2	4	12	4	28	26	20	1

** Less than 0.5 percent*